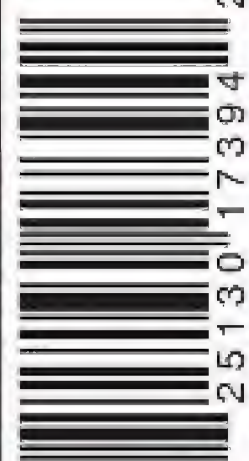


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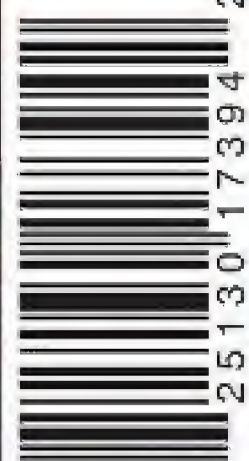
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- Aludor -  
Vinicius  
Andrade

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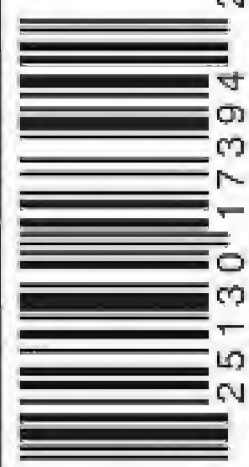


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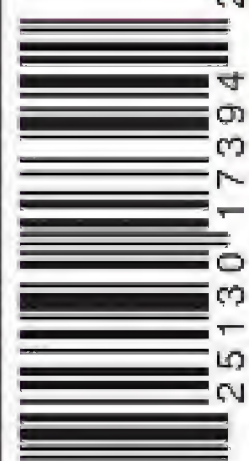
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I-90 EAST, NEAR  
EPHRATA, WA.

TWO HOURS AGO.

DOESN'T  
MAKE SENSE.

WHAT  
DOESN'T  
MAKE SENSE,  
SOFIA?

YOU'VE  
GOT THE **FANGS**,  
THE **BLOOD-DRINKING**  
THING, THE PRETTY-MUCH-  
**IMPERVIOUS-TO-**  
DAMAGE THING.

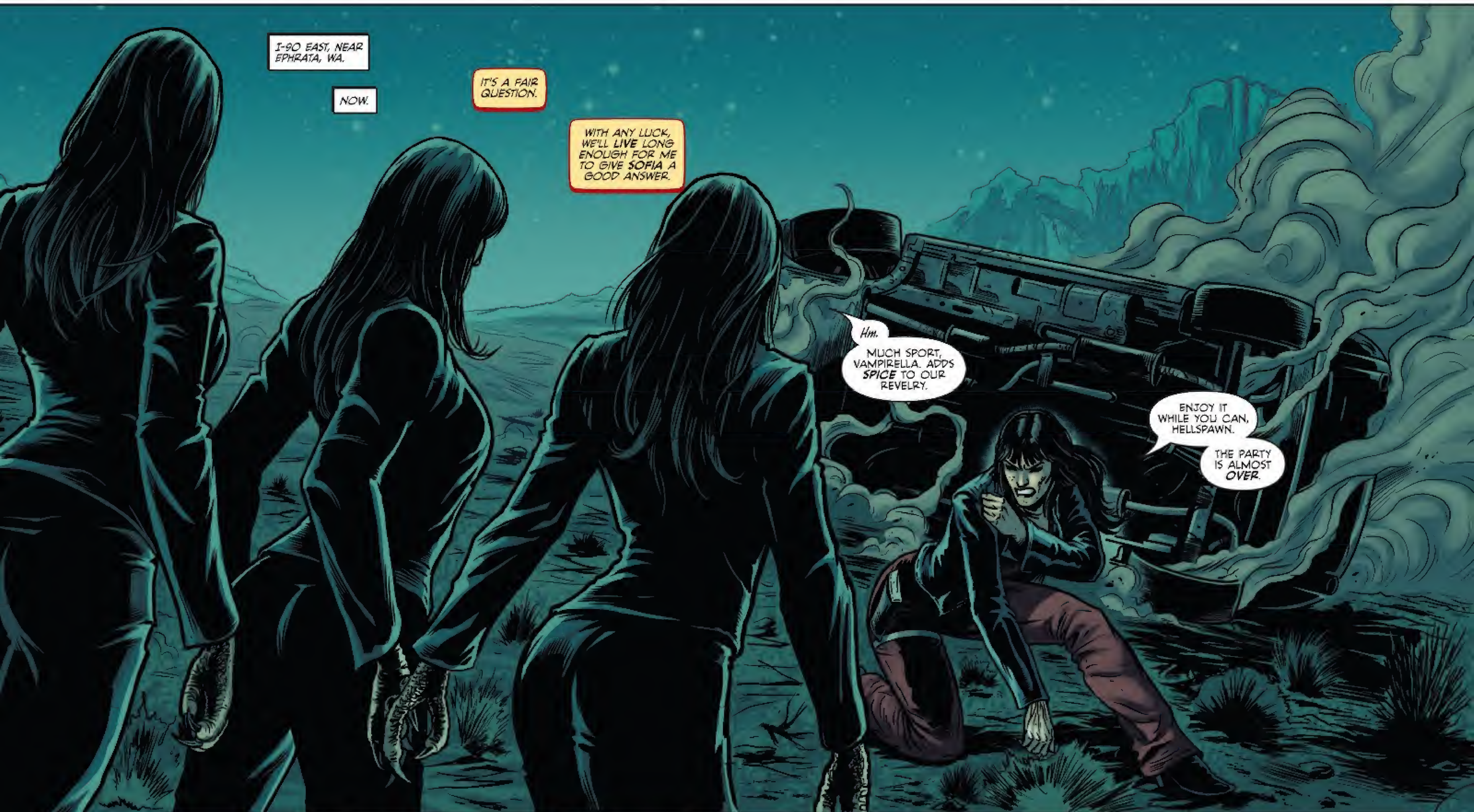
NOT TO  
MENTION THE  
WHOLE **HYPNO-STARE**  
WHAMMY YOU  
LAID ON ME.

SO, IF YOU'RE  
A **VAMPIRE**, HOW  
CAN YOU BE OUT  
IN THE **SUN**?

I MEAN,  
AND DON'T TAKE  
THIS THE WRONG  
WAY, BUT  
**SERIOUSLY.**

WHAT ARE  
YOU?





I-90 EAST, NEAR  
EPHRATA, WA.

NOW.

IT'S A FAIR  
QUESTION.

WITH ANY LUCK,  
WE'LL LIVE LONG  
ENOUGH FOR ME  
TO GIVE SOFIA A  
GOOD ANSWER.

Hm.  
MUCH SPORT,  
VAMPIRELLA. ADDS  
SPICE TO OUR  
REVELRY.

ENJOY IT  
WHILE YOU CAN,  
HELLSPAWN.

THE PARTY  
IS ALMOST  
OVER.



Tsk.  
NO WAY TO  
GREET YOUR KIN,  
VAMPIRELLA.



YOU  
--NNNGH!--

ARE  
NO KIN OF  
MINE.



Hm.  
INCORRECT.

MORE FAMILY  
TO YOU THAN THE  
SACKS OF BLOOD,  
BONE AND MEAT  
YOU PROTECT.



INFORMATION FROM MY... **BENEFACTORS** PUT US ON THE TRAIL OF THESE THREE.

SEVERAL BIZARRE MURDERS, LINKED BY KANJI CHARACTERS WRITTEN IN THE BLOOD OF THE VICTIMS.

WE HAVE MUCH TO THANK YOU FOR, SISTER.

YOUR BATTLE WITH THE WORM, **YAG-ATH VERMELLUS**, SOFTENED THE BARRIER BETWEEN OUR HOME AND THIS PLACE.

A MAD RUSH THROUGH THE HOLES YOU **TORE** IN THE WALL BETWEEN HEAVEN AND HELL.


AND **HERE** WE ARE.

AND NOW, IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO **GO**.










DARK MOTHER,  
I DON'T THINK  
I'VE EVER BEEN  
HIT THAT HARD.



VISION BLURRING.  
HAVE TO MOVE,  
STAND, FIGHT.


WHATEVER THEY  
DISH OUT--



--TAKE IT.



Hm.



DAMN  
THEM.

TOO PRECISE,  
TOO QUICK,  
THEY'RE FORCING  
ME TO REACT.

MAKING  
ME DANCE TO  
THEIR TUNE.



BACK THEM OFF,  
BUY MYSELF  
SOME SPACE.

KREEEEK

REGAIN THE  
INITIATIVE.

Hm.

EMBARASSING.



WE ARE  
THE KARASU  
SHIMAI.

THE  
SISTERS OF  
THE CROW.

ASSASSINS  
FOR A DUKE OF  
CHAOS, CURSE HIS  
BLACK HEART.





AND WE  
WILL **NOT**  
BE DENIED  
OUR SPORT,  
*SISTER.*



THIS IS GOING  
TO BE...  
CHALLENGING.

GET  
READY.

THEY MOVE LIKE  
MACHINES,  
PERFECTLY  
SYNCHRONIZED.



GET  
READY...

A COLLECTIVE  
MECHANISM BUILT  
TO OVERWHELM  
AN ENEMY.



READY...

EFFECTIVE...



**SOFIA!**

...BUT ALSO  
PREDICTABLE.









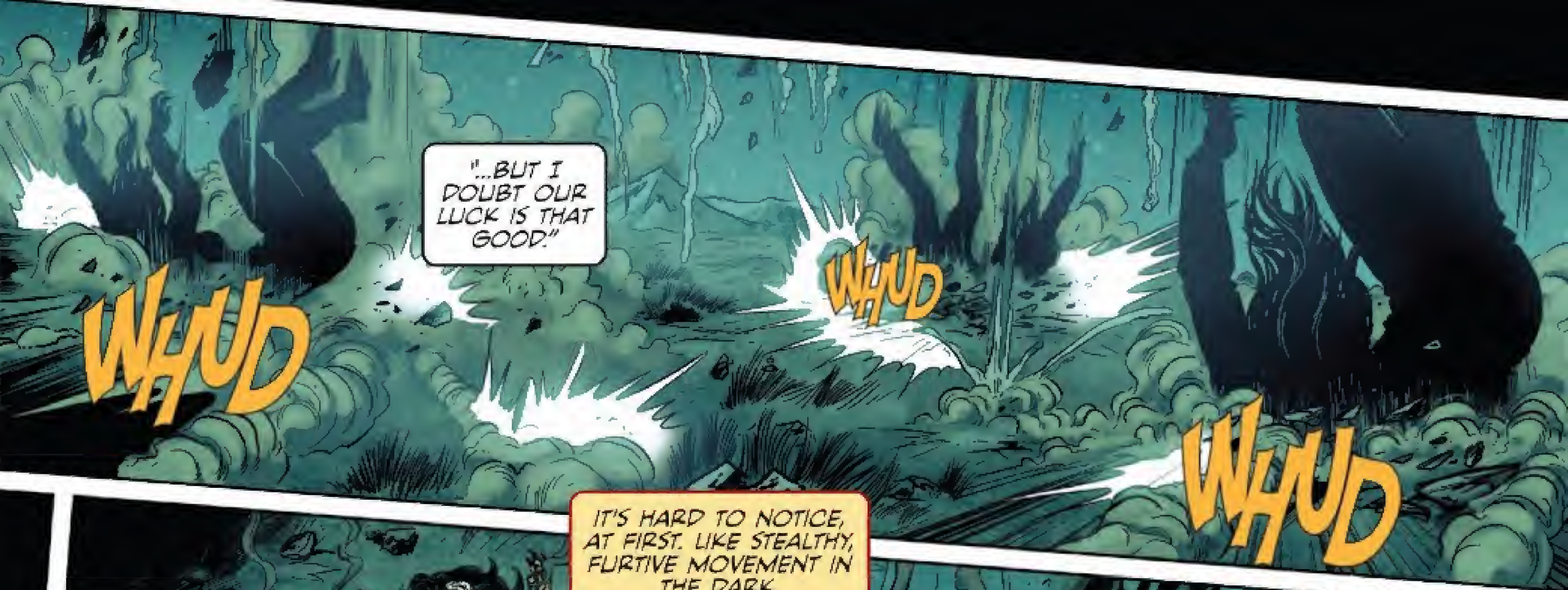
RUNNING NOW  
DON'T LOOK  
BACK

BOOM!

GOD  
DAMN.  
ARE THEY...  
ARE THEY  
DEAD?

MAYBE...





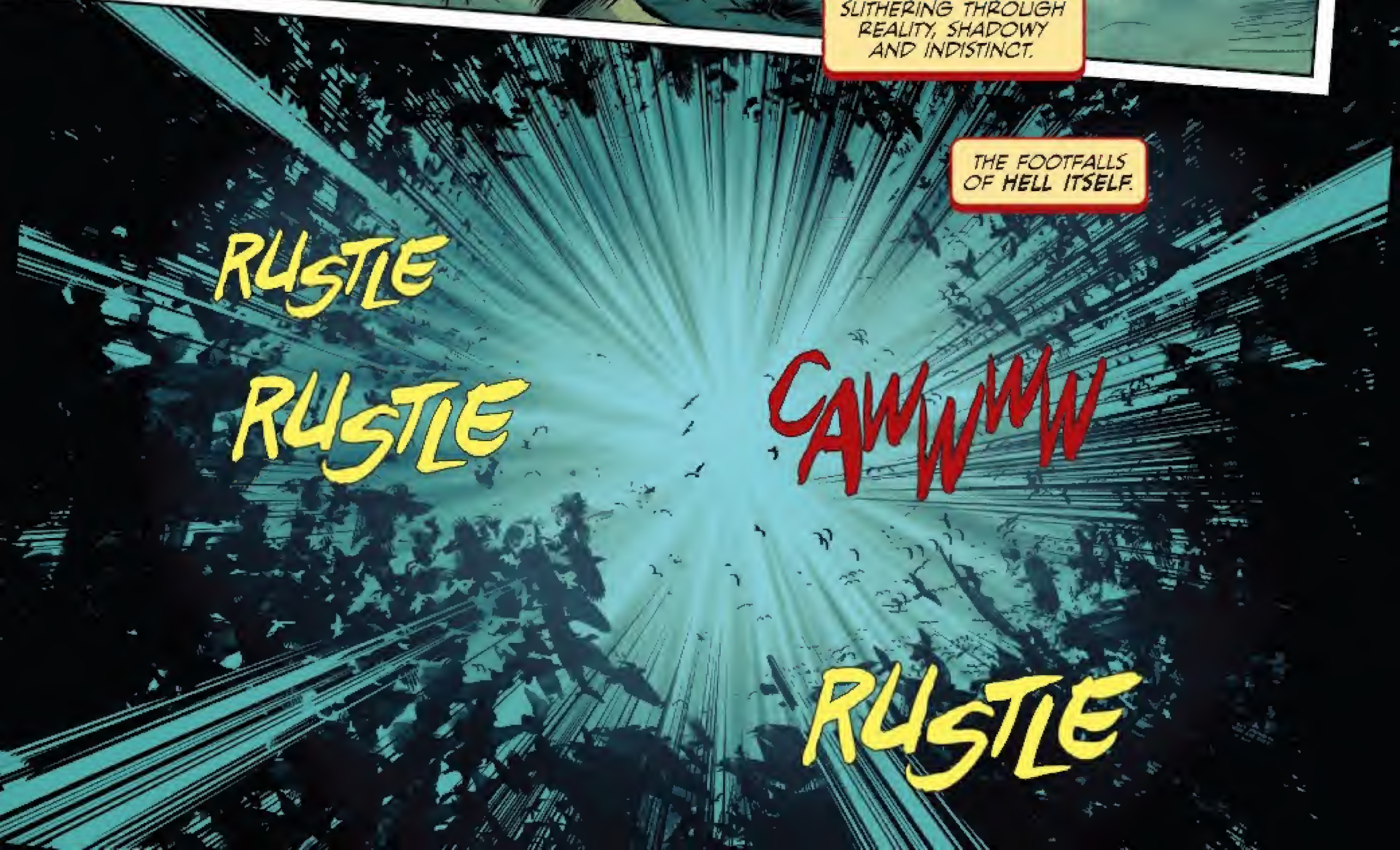
"...BUT I  
DOUBT OUR  
LUCK IS THAT  
GOOD."

IT'S HARD TO NOTICE,  
AT FIRST, LIKE STEALTHY,  
FURTIVE MOVEMENT IN  
THE DARK.

THAT FAMILIAR SENSE  
OF SOMETHING OTHER  
BRUSHING AGAINST  
THIS WORLD.



SLITHERING THROUGH  
REALITY, SHADOWY  
AND INDISTINCT.



THE FOOTFALLS  
OF HELL ITSELF.





GOD. THAT  
STENCH...

SULPHUR AND  
BRIMSTONE.

I'M GUESSING  
THAT'S *EAU DE  
HELL*, RIGHT? AND  
THAT *CAN'T* BE  
GOOD.



CAW W

CAW

CAW W W

CAW

CAW W CAW

CAW CAW W W W

CAW

CAW W W W

CAW CAW W

CAW W W W  
CAW

CAW W W W W

CAW W W W

CAW W



Hm.  
AMUSING.





SO HOW 'BOUT WE START MOVING IN THE DIRECTION OF NOT HERE?

IT'S NOT THE FIRST TIME I'VE HAD A HUMAN ALLY.



AT TIMES LIKE THESE, I HAVE TO WONDER WHY I ALLOW IT.

THEY'RE TERRIBLY FRAGILE...

Huff  
Huff  
Huff

PREPARE YOURSELF.



...AND THEY NEED CONSTANT PROTECTION.

--HUH?



WE NEED TO GET SOME DISTANCE FROM THEM. NOW.

Whooolp!





Hm.  
INTERESTING  
CHALLENGE, THIS  
DEVIL-BORN  
CREATURE.

WORTH  
INCLUSION IN  
THE **MONUMENT**  
WE BUILD,  
YES.

IF WE  
FIND HER.



Hm.

THAT WAY.  
THE **VAMPIRELLA**  
AND HER HUMAN  
CATSPAW.



THEN WE  
GO.  
I WANT  
TO LICK THEIR  
**BLOOD** FROM  
MY **CLAWS**.



HOLD,  
MY SISTER.

A GOOD  
HUNT MAKES  
THE MEAT ALL  
THE **SWEETER**,  
YES?

Hm.





LET  
THEM  
RUN.



SOON,  
IKARI--MY SISTER  
OF *RAGE*--YOU  
WILL VENT YOUR  
BOTTOMLESS  
ANGER.

SOON,  
ZETSOBOU--  
MY SISTER OF  
*DESPAIR*--YOU  
WILL DRINK DEEP  
OF THEIR  
*SORROW*.

Hm.



AND YOU,  
KANKI, OUR  
SISTER OF  
*DELIGHT*?



Hm.  
 I WILL  
 BATHE IN THE  
 JOY OF **FREEDOM**,  
 OF **MURDER**, OF  
**DEATH** IN THE  
 NIGHT.

AS WILL  
WE ALL.





THEY'LL BE BACK, SOON.

ALL WE BOUGHT WITH THE EXPLOSION IS A LITTLE TIME.

WITH ANY LUCK, WE'VE BOUGHT ENOUGH TIME.



UH, V?

A CREEPY OLD FARMHOUSE IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, AND A TRIO OF MONSTERS IN HOT PURSUIT.

YOU'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN A HORROR MOVIE, HAVE YOU?



NO. TOO MUCH LIKE WORK.



YEAH, WELL, **SPOILER ALERT:**

IT ALMOST **NEVER** ENDS WELL FOR THE PEOPLE IN THE HOUSE.





LOOK  
AROUND FOR  
ANYTHING WE CAN  
USE. A WEAPON,  
A VEHICLE, A  
PHONE.

NOT MUCH  
HERE, V. UNLESS  
THEY HAVE A FATAL  
WEAKNESS TO  
DUST OR DEAD  
SPIDERS.



IT TAKES FIVE MINUTES  
TO CONFIRM THE BAD  
NEWS.

THERE'S  
NOTHING  
HERE.

--NOT  
A LOT IN  
THE WAY OF  
SUPPLIES.

ONE PISTOL,  
WITH ONE FULL  
CLIP, A COUPLE  
BAT-BLADES, AND  
SOME BLESSED  
TOYS.

I'D BE  
DEPRESSED IF I  
WASN'T ALREADY  
TERRIFIED.



STUPID.  
LEFT MY CELL IN  
THE CAR. COULD'VE  
USED IT TO CALL  
YOUR MYSTERIOUS  
FRIENDS--



THEY'RE *NOT*  
FRIENDS.

THEY DON'T  
VIEW...*THINGS* LIKE  
ME AS FRIENDS.  
JUST USEFUL  
TOOLS.





SO WHY  
ARE WE OUT  
HERE?

WHY PUT  
YOURSELF--  
PUT *US*--IN  
THE MIDDLE  
OF THIS?

...WHO  
ELSE IS GOING  
TO DO IT,  
SOFIA?

IF I AM  
MERELY AN  
INSTRUMENT,  
THEN I SHOULD  
FULFILL MY  
*PURPOSE*.



JESUS.

YOU'RE NOT  
AN 'INSTRUMENT,'  
V. YOU'RE A  
*PERSON*.



NO.

I'M  
*NOT*.

I'M NOT ONE  
OF YOU, SOFIA.  
YOU SHOULD KEEP  
THAT IN MIND.



KEEP  
LOOKING.

THEY'LL  
BE HERE  
SOON.





FOOLISH.

FOOLISH TO  
BRING THE  
GIRL ALONG.

SHE'S RIGHT.  
IT CAN'T END  
WELL FOR HER.



BEST TO KEEP  
HER AT SOME  
DISTANCE.

SHIELD HER FROM  
THEM IF I CAN, GET  
HER CLEAR OF THE  
FIGHT IF POSSIBLE.

BEFORE SHE STARTS  
TO MAKE ME THINK  
I'M HUMAN, TOO.

UH, V.?

BECAUSE THE LAST TIME I  
FELT THAT WAY, IT DIDN'T  
END WELL FOR ME, EITHER.

I'VE BEEN  
THINKING.  
ABOUT  
SOMETHING  
THOSE...WOMEN  
SAID TO  
YOU.







WE GOT PUT ON THEIR TRAIL  
BECAUSE OF A SERIES OF  
MURDERS, ACCORDING  
TO YOUR MYSTERY...  
*ASSOCIATES.*

THE DEAD  
LEFT *CRUCIFIED* AND  
ON DISPLAY WITH KANJI  
SCRAWLED IN THEIR  
OWN *BLOOD.*

臆病

悪徳

欺瞞

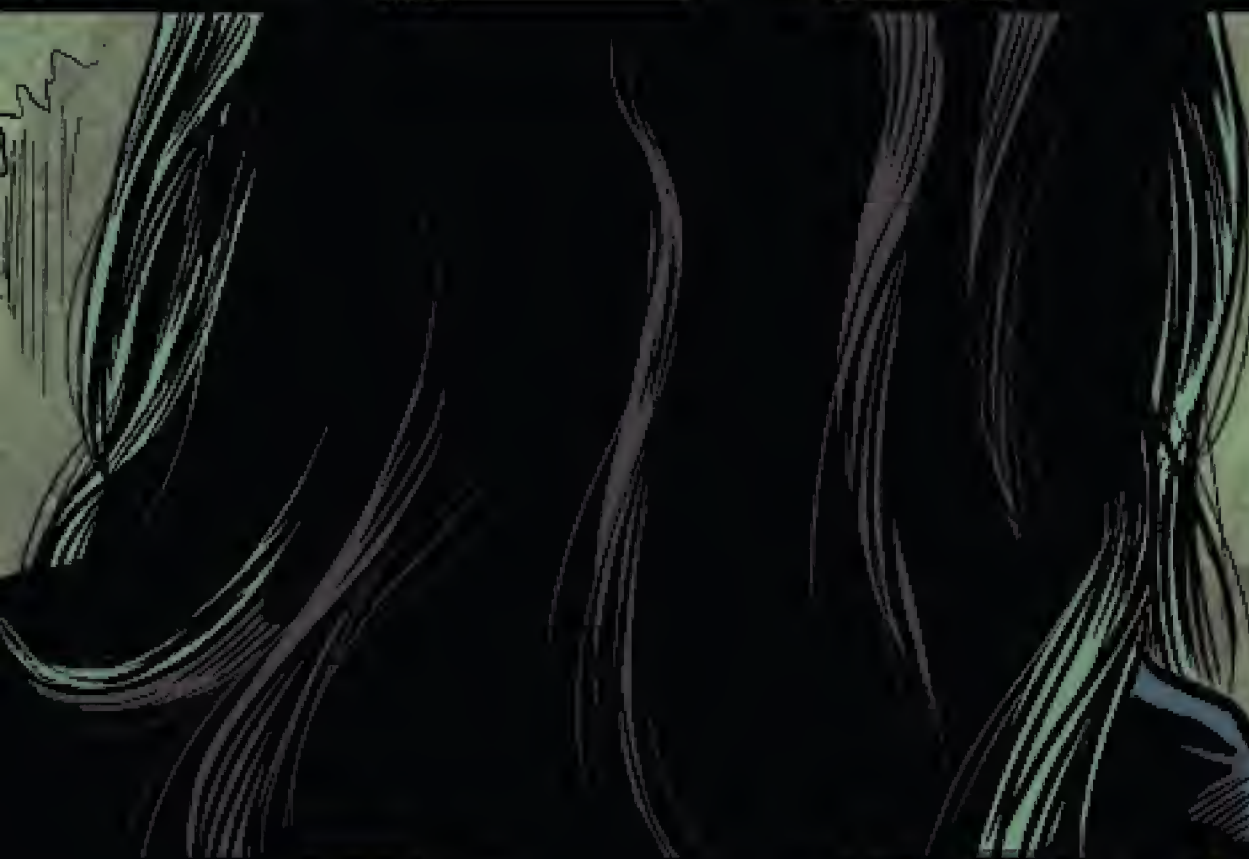
FIRST, A REVEREND,  
MARKED WITH THE KANJI  
FOR '*DECEIT*.' THEN, A COP,  
MARKED FOR '*COWARDICE*.'  
LAST, THE GUY FROM THE  
GAS STATION, MARKED  
AS '*IMMORAL*.'

ONE OF  
THE WOMEN  
WHO ATTACKED  
YOU SAID AS  
MUCH:

"WE BUILD A  
MONUMENT TO  
CORRUPTION. THE  
*IMMORAL*, THE  
*DECEITFUL*, THE  
*COWARDLY*."

"THEN SHE SAID YOUR  
DEATH WOULD COVER  
*DISLOYALTY*, *DISHONOR*,  
AND *INSOLENCE*. IT'S  
LIKE A *CHECKLIST*  
TO THEM."

"SO WHAT HAPPENS  
IF THEY CAN'T  
COMPLETE IT?"




...INTERESTING.  
GOOD WORK,  
SOFIA.



AND,  
AS IT HAPPENS,  
MAYBE THERE'S  
A *WEAPON* HERE  
WE CAN USE...





A comic book illustration showing three women from behind, walking away from a two-story, dilapidated house at night. The women are wearing black, form-fitting outfits with long hair. The house is old and weathered, with a chimney and a porch. The background features a dark, starry sky and distant mountains. A speech bubble from the house contains the text: "...SO LET'S HOPE WE HAVE ENOUGH TIME TO USE IT."

...SO LET'S  
HOPE WE HAVE  
ENOUGH TIME  
TO USE IT.

TO BE CONCLUDED...



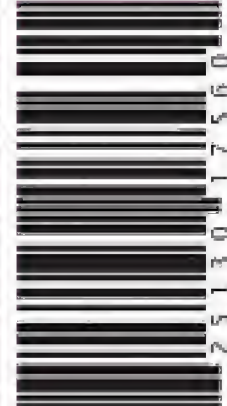
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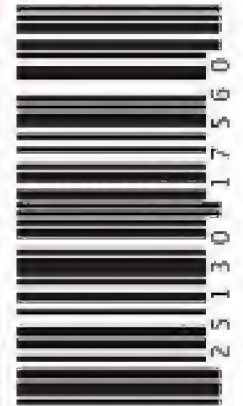
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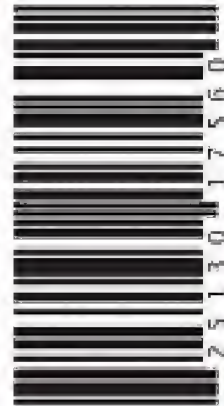


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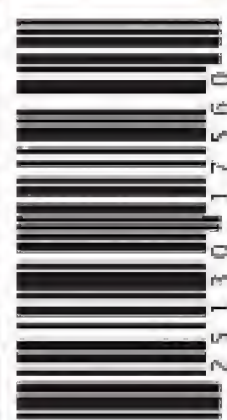
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ABANDONED FARMHOUSE,  
NEAR EPHRATA, WA.

YOU'LL DO  
*FINE*, SOFIA. JUST  
STICK TO THE PLAN,  
AND WE'LL *BOTH*  
MAKE IT OUT OF  
HERE.

I'M NOT  
SURE THIS  
QUALIFIES AS  
A PLAN, V.

LET'S  
RECAP: A TRIO OF  
*INDESTRUCTABLE*  
DEMONIC ASSASSINS  
ABOUT TO KILL US?  
CHECK.

NO BACKUP,  
NO SUPPLIES, AND  
AN ABANDONED  
FARMHOUSE WHERE  
NO ONE CAN HEAR  
US *SCREAM*?  
CHECK.

OH, AND  
*ONE GUN* LEFT  
BETWEEN US?  
CHECK.

THEY'RE *NOT*  
INDESTRUCTABLE.

NEITHER  
ARE YOU,  
V.

PERHAPS  
NOT,  
GOOD  
THING I HAVE  
YOU AS MY  
SECRET  
WEAPON.

*CHAK*



MY COMPANION--SOFIA MURRAY--IS BRAVE AND RESOURCEFUL, BUT HER FEAR IS A PALPABLE, LIVING THING.

IT'S TAKEN YOU LONG ENOUGH, HELLSPAWN.

OUR ENEMY IS RELENTLESS, DRUNK ON THE BLOOD FROM SEVERAL GRUESOME MURDERS, AND EAGER FOR MORE.

I WAS BEGINNING TO WONDER...

INTENT ON BUILDING A MONUMENT TO HUMAN WEAKNESS AND SIN.

...IF YOU'D HAD ENOUGH YET.

A CORRUPT CELEBRATION OF THEIR NEWFOUND FREEDOM FROM HELL.

Hm.

Hm.

MOST AMUSING, SISTER.

WE KERASU SHIMEI--WE SISTERS OF THE CROW--HAVE RARELY KNOWN SUCH SPORT.

WITH YOUR DEATH, WE ADD TO OUR MONUMENT, THREE-FOLD.

I BELIEVE YOU SAID I REPRESENT DISLOYALTY, DISHONOR AND INSOLENT.

YOUR PETTY CHECKLIST OF SIN.

WHERE DOES MY SENDING YOU SCREAMING BACK TO HELL FIT INTO YOUR PLANS?

W







INDIVIDUALLY, EACH OF THE KERASU SHIMAI IS A TERRIFYING, SKILLED COMBATANT.

YOU FIRST.

KRAAAK

WHEN THEY WORK IN CONCERT, THEY'RE PRACTICALLY UNSTOPPABLE.



SPEED, POWER AND PERFECT COORDINATION FORMING A LETHAL, HELLBORN MACHINE.

CAWWWW

Hm.

Hm.

THERE'S AN OLD SAYING:

ENTER FREELY AND OF YOUR OWN WILL.









TIME TO  
BREAK THE  
MACHINE.

WHO'S  
HIDING?

KRR  
RAAAASH

I'LL BE  
WITH YOU IN  
A MINUTE.

CAW





HAMMER AT THE  
GEARS UNTIL  
THEY BREAK.

KAR  
RAASH

NNNGH

DIE.

SLSSSSH

WE SHALL  
FEAST...

...ON YOUR  
BEATING  
HEART.

NNNGH

PERHAPS.

AND KEEP POUNDING  
ON THEM UNTIL THE  
ENTIRE MECHANISM  
BLOWS APART.

IF  
I HAD  
ONE.



DEMONS HAVE  
TO PLAY BY  
CERTAIN RULES.

IT'S  
THE MASKS,  
ISN'T IT?

KAAARRRAAK

CAAWWWWW

THOSE RULES ARE  
STACKED HEAVILY IN  
THEIR FAVOR, BUT THEY  
HAVE TO OBEY THEM.

KRAK

YOU  
ESCAPED FROM  
HELL. YOU WEREN'T  
SUMMONED.






THE KERASU  
SHIMAI ARE  
NO DIFFERENT.


YOU NEED  
AN **ANCHOR**  
TO KEEP YOU  
HERE.

THE THREE OF THEM  
WORK AS A TEAM,  
AND AS A TEAM,  
THEY'RE **UNBEATABLE**.




--KILL YOU...  
HEAR YOU  
**SCREAM--**

THE MURDERS  
YOU COMMITTED,  
YOUR "MONUMENT?"  
A **RITUAL** TO KEEP  
YOU **HERE** IN THE  
PHYSICAL WORLD.



BUT IF YOU SEPARATE  
THEM? STRIP THEM OF  
THEIR ADVANTAGES IN  
COORDINATION, SPEED,  
AND POWER?



THEY ARE  
NOTHING  
BUT **PREY**.

OFF YOU  
GO.









...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

KILLED A DEMONESS.

ALL IN ALL, A GOOD START TO THE EVENING.



Hm.

TRAGIC.

THAT YOU SHOULD FIGHT *US*, TO PROTECT MERE *CATTLE*. SUCH FUTILITY, YES?



WE *KNOW* WHAT *WE* ARE. UNDYING, MURDER INCARNATE.

NEXT TO THAT, WHAT ARE *YOU*? CONFUSED SHADOWS OF MEMORY AND POWER, DENYING YOUR PAST, DENYING YOUR *POTENTIAL*.

HOW CAN *YOU* HOPE TO DEFEAT *US*?



I SHOT YOUR SISTER IN THE *FACE*.

THAT SEEMED TO DO THE TRICK.





THEY'RE STILL  
POWERFUL, STILL  
TREMENDOUSLY  
SKILLED.



BUT THEY'RE JUST  
SLIGHTLY OUT OF SYNCH  
NOW. FRACTIONALLY  
SLOWER THAN OUR  
EARLIER ENCOUNTERS.



SO I KEEP UP  
THE PRESSURE.  
KEEP THEM OFF  
BALANCE.



HURT  
THEM.

IT'S NOT  
YOUR TURN  
YET...



KEEP THEM  
FOCUSED ON  
THE FIGHT,  
AND ON ME...

...BE  
PATIENT.







...AND JUST TAKE  
THE HITS, AND KEEP  
PUNISHING THEM.



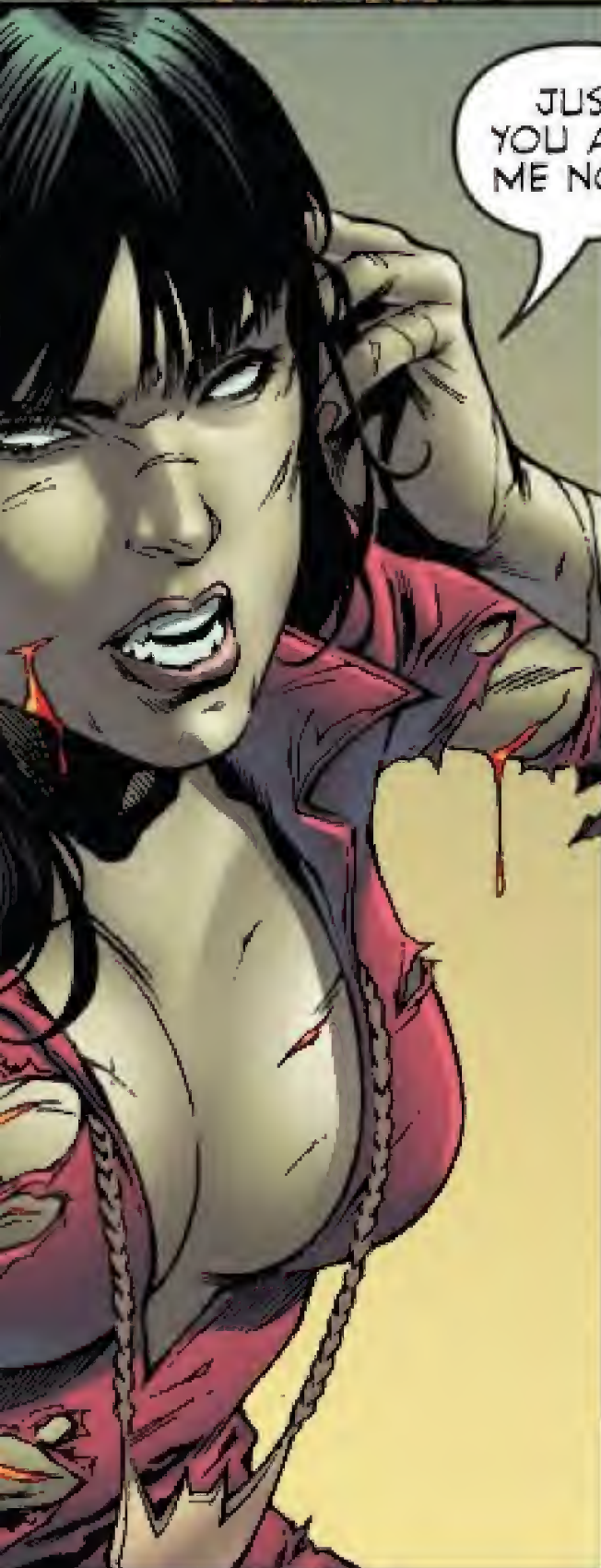
AND PRAY TO THE  
DARK MOTHER  
THAT SOFIA DOES  
HER PART IN TIME.







...IT DIES  
SCREAMING  
IN ANGER.



JUST  
YOU AND  
ME NOW.



Hm.  
SO  
STRANGE.



FEEL YOUR CONFUSION, YES?  
YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU  
ARE. SO MANY **VERSIONS**  
OF YOU, SO MUCH  
**CONFUSION.**

HELLBORN WEAPON?  
OTHERWORLDLY ENTITY?  
YOUR MEMORIES? REAL  
OR ILLUSION?

YOU DON'T  
KNOW. BUT  
I KNOW.



ALMOST  
THERE...

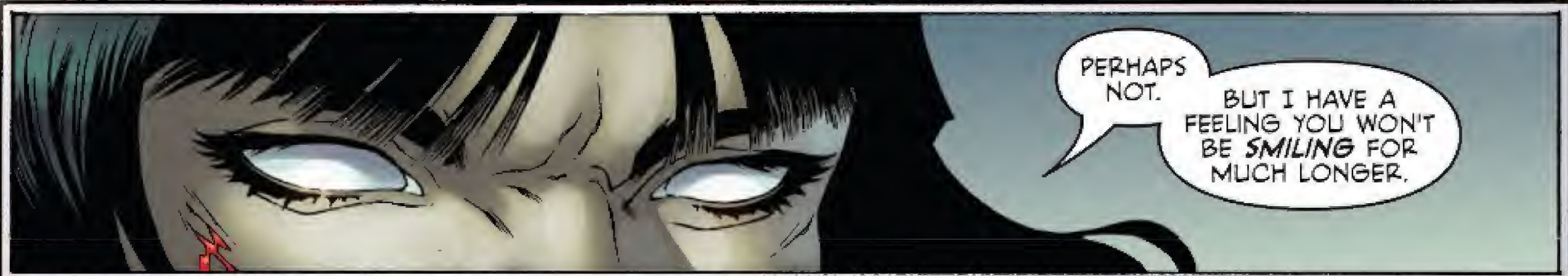
ALMOST  
THERE...





WHEN I FINISH  
YOU, FINISH YOUR  
COMPANION...

...YOU  
STILL WON'T  
HAVE ANY  
ANSWERS.



PERHAPS  
NOT.

BUT I HAVE A  
FEELING YOU WON'T  
BE *SMILING* FOR  
MUCH LONGER.



Hm.

AN  
ERROR.



FINISH  
THE FIGHT  
ANOTHER  
DAY.

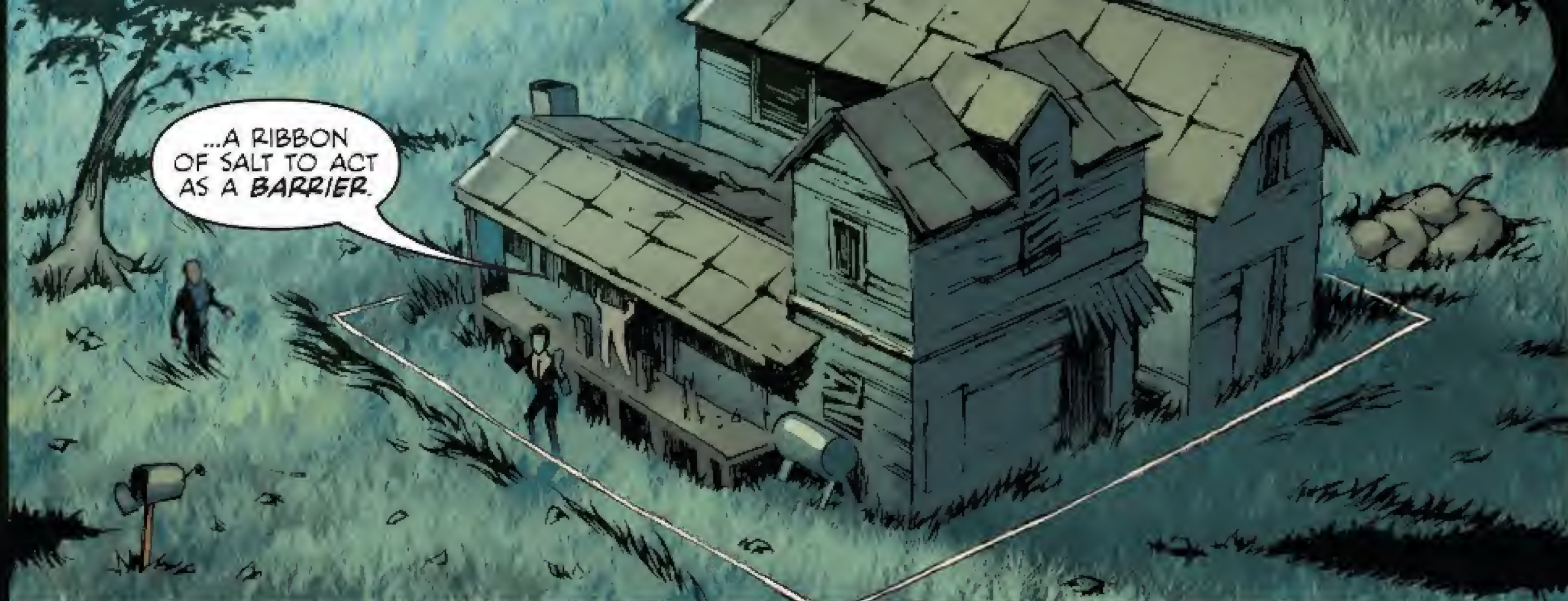
AFTER RITUAL  
IS COMPLETE, YES?  
AFTER I TURN THIS  
WORLD INTO MY  
PLAYGROUND.

WHAM













YOU SAID  
YOU KNOW WHO I  
AM. WHERE I CAME  
FROM. YOU SAID NOT  
KNOWING WHAT I  
REALLY AM IS A  
WEAKNESS.

I'VE THOUGHT  
ABOUT THAT  
FOR **YEARS**,  
DEMONESS.

WHAT AM  
I? WHERE  
DID I COME  
FROM?

WHICH OF  
MY MEMORIES  
ARE REAL OR  
FALSE?



I FINALLY CAME  
UP WITH AN ANSWER  
THAT **WORKS** FOR  
ME.

WHEN IT COMES  
TO THE QUESTION  
OF MY **PAST**...

**KLICK**





**THE END**  
NEXT: "THE SIDE TRIP"

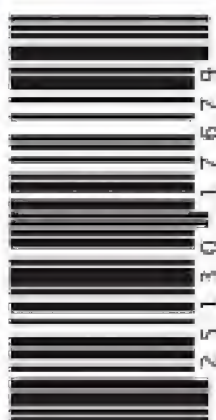


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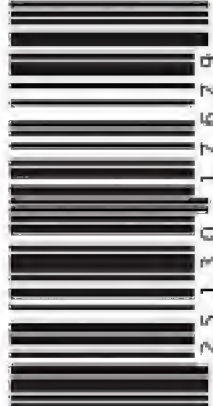


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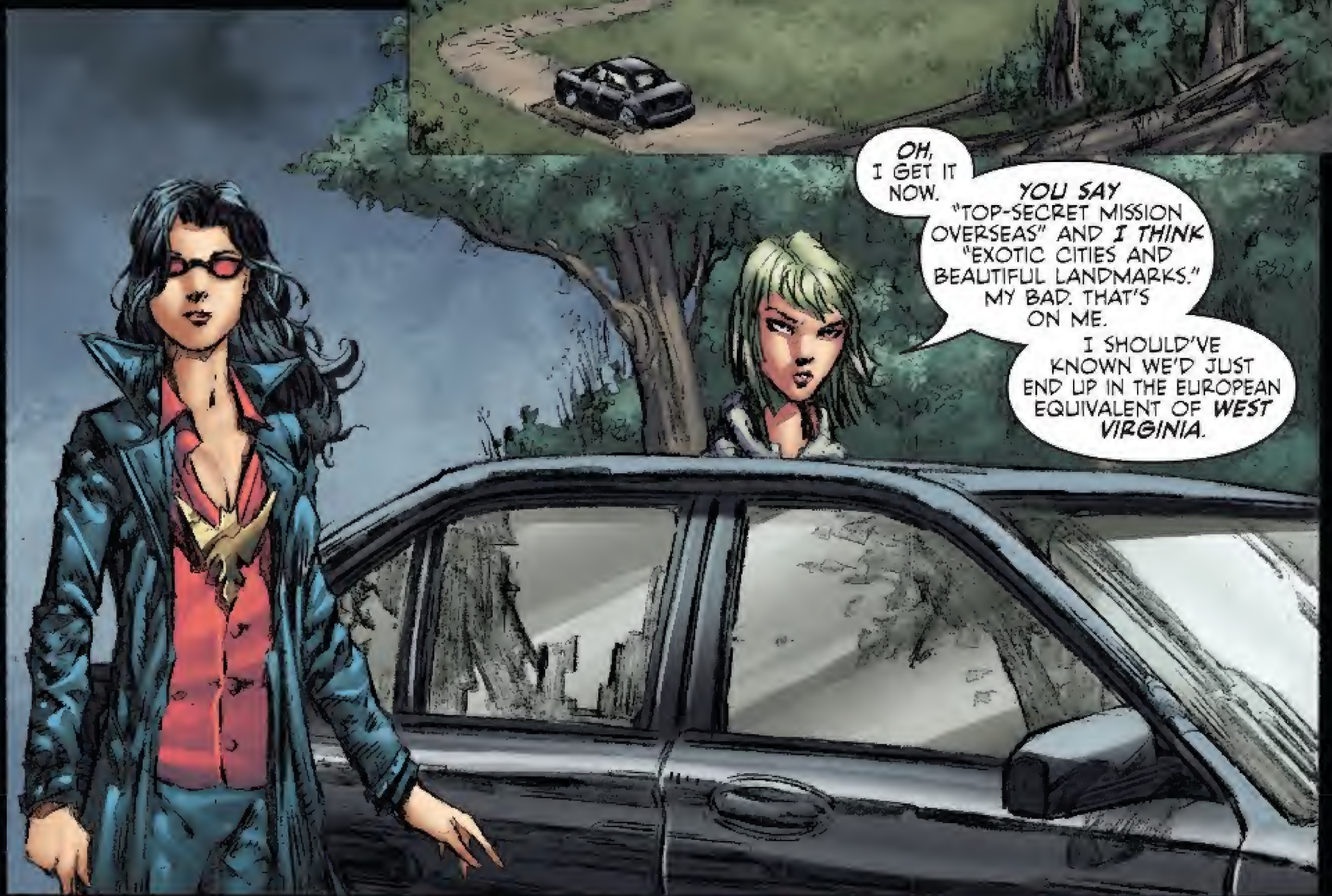
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JUST OUTSIDE FRANKFURT,  
GERMANY--1800 HOURS LOCAL



OH,  
I GET IT  
NOW.

YOU SAY  
"TOP-SECRET MISSION  
OVERSEAS" AND I THINK  
"EXOTIC CITIES AND  
BEAUTIFUL LANDMARKS."  
MY BAD. THAT'S  
ON ME.

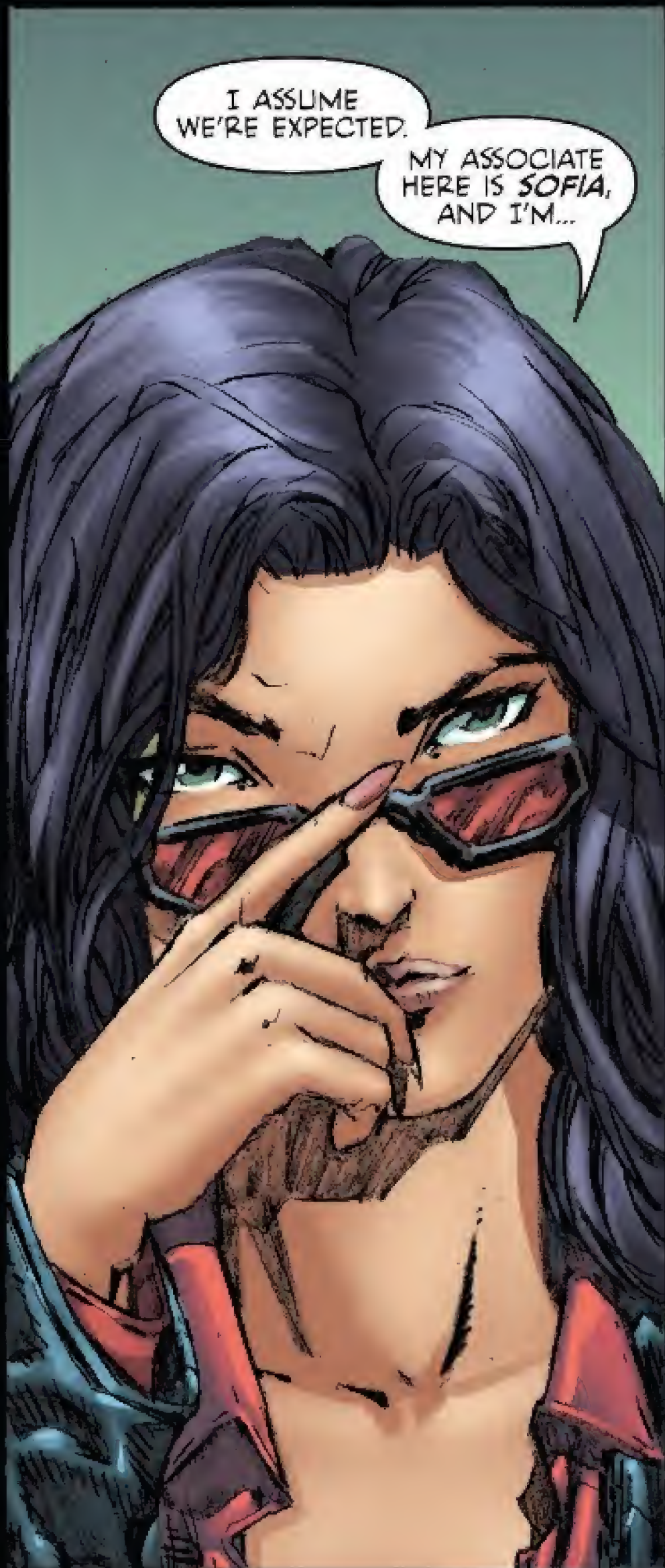
I SHOULD'VE  
KNOWN WE'D JUST  
END UP IN THE EUROPEAN  
EQUIVALENT OF **WEST  
VIRGINIA**.



HE'S LEAVING.  
OF **COURSE**  
HE'S LEAVING.







I ASSUME  
WE'RE EXPECTED.

MY ASSOCIATE  
HERE IS *SOFIA*,  
AND I'M...



...*VAMPIRELLA*.  
IT IS AN *HONOR* AND  
A PERSONAL *PLEASURE*  
TO MAKE YOUR  
ACQUAINTANCE.

I AM *DAVID*,  
AND THIS IS  
*GREGORIO*.

WE ARE *ASSISTANT*  
*CURATES* IN THE  
*SILVER APOSTOLATE*,  
AND WE ARE AT  
YOUR SERVICE.



THAT'S GOOD  
TO KNOW.  
THANK YOU.



I AM A GREAT  
ADMIRER OF YOUR WORK.  
FOR MY *SCRIVENER'S*  
*ACHIEVEMENT*, I PREPARED  
THE *CHRONICLE* OF YOUR  
EXPLOITS WITH THE  
*SCARLET LEGION*.

IF YOU  
WOULD, PLEASE  
STEP INSIDE THE  
PERIMETER  
PROPER...?



THEY'RE  
CERTAINLY *EAGER*,  
AREN'T THEY?

SURE, FOR  
*YOU* THEY'RE  
PRACTICALLY A FAN  
CLUB. I'M JUST  
YOUR *PLUS-*  
*ONE*.











YOU MADE GOOD TIME.



WE WERE HEADED TO *RUSSIA* WHEN THEY DIVERTED US HERE.

*RUSSIA*. HMMM. YOU WILL HAVE AN INTERESTING *TIME* THERE, I THINK.

OH? IS THAT AN *INFORMED* PREDICTION, MISTER...?

*FAUSTO SABATINI*. LET US PROCEED WITH OUR BUSINESS, EH?



"CARCERIERE DEI DEMONI"? THAT MEANS YOU'RE AN *EXORCIST*, RIGHT?

IN A MANNER OF SPEAKING.

I HAVE SAID MY *PRAYERS*, SIGNORE...



...AND THE *LORD* HAS SAID AS MUCH TO ME AS HE *WILL* FOR NOW. I AM *READY*.



I WILL TAKE THE GOOD LADY *NOVELLA* UP TO HER ROOM AND BEGIN THE RITES. YOU MUST *STAY* HERE UNTIL I SUMMON YOU.

*DO NOT* ACT FOR ANYTHING BUT THE SOUND OF MY *VOICE*. BE SWIFT, BUT BE *CERTAIN*.













FORGIVE  
US, LORD--

--SHE'S SHAKING.  
HE'S TRYING TO  
MAKE US HURT HER.  
TAKE CARE--



SHE'S  
SECURE.

EEHN  
GMMURRGH  
TUFIKTUFIK  
GRYAAOO  
HUHUUH



OPEN THE  
DOOR, SOFIA.  
OPEN THE DOOR  
FOR ME.



WHO'S THERE?  
I CAN'T SEE YOU.  
WHO'S AT THE  
DOOR?









RELENT.



THEY'RE **HUNGRY**. WHY DIDN'T THEY COME FOR ME? WHY DIDN'T THEY **FINISH** IT?

WHO'S THERE?!



I'M **HERE**, LITTLE GIRL. I'VE ALWAYS **BEEEN** HERE. I WILL ALWAYS **BE** HERE.



LIKE THE **SONG** YOU'VE NEVER HEARD THAT YOU **ALWAYS** HEAR OFF IN THE DISTANCE.



YOU WILL LISTEN TO MY VOICE. YOU WILL NOT LOOK TO MY FORM. TO REVEAL IS TO BETRAY.

I OFFER SANCTUARY. I OFFER RELEASE.





RELEASE?  
FROM  
WHAT?

FROM  
THE BONDAGE  
OF A SHADOW  
THRALL.



COUNT THREE,  
SWEET MISS, AND  
FIND THE STRENGTH  
TO MAKE A CHOICE.  
FREE YOURSELF.

...FREE  
YOURSELF...



THE PLAN,  
SOFIA.

VAMPIRELLA!



STAY AWAY  
FROM ME!

HRRLUUEEEE

SHRAAA



SUH-SUH--  
SUHOOOFFIAAH  
Y-YOU  
HUHURRLURRT  
MUH-MUH-  
MEEE









THOSE ARE  
**GOOD AND HONEST**  
PEOPLE IN THAT CARRIAGE.  
NO KIN AND NO CONCERN  
OF **YOURS**, THAT'S  
FOR SURE.



HERE NOW, **YOU**  
**BRAZEN WOMAN!**  
WE'LL SEE YOU **SUBMIT**  
TO THE LAW OR WE'LL  
SEND **YOU** TO THE  
**UNDERTAKER!**

LET GO  
OF ME! THIS  
ISN'T **REAL**, THIS  
ISN'T **RIGHT!**



**YOU'RE NO**  
**AUTHORITY ON**  
**RIGHT AND REAL,**  
**TART. YOU STINK**  
**OF SIN AND**  
**BLOOD.**

**RELEASE**  
**ME NOW. I'M**  
**WARNING**  
**YOU--**

**RIGHT,**  
**THEN.**



**CHL-**  
**KRAK**

**YOU'RE**  
**SLOW. TOO**  
**SLOW.**



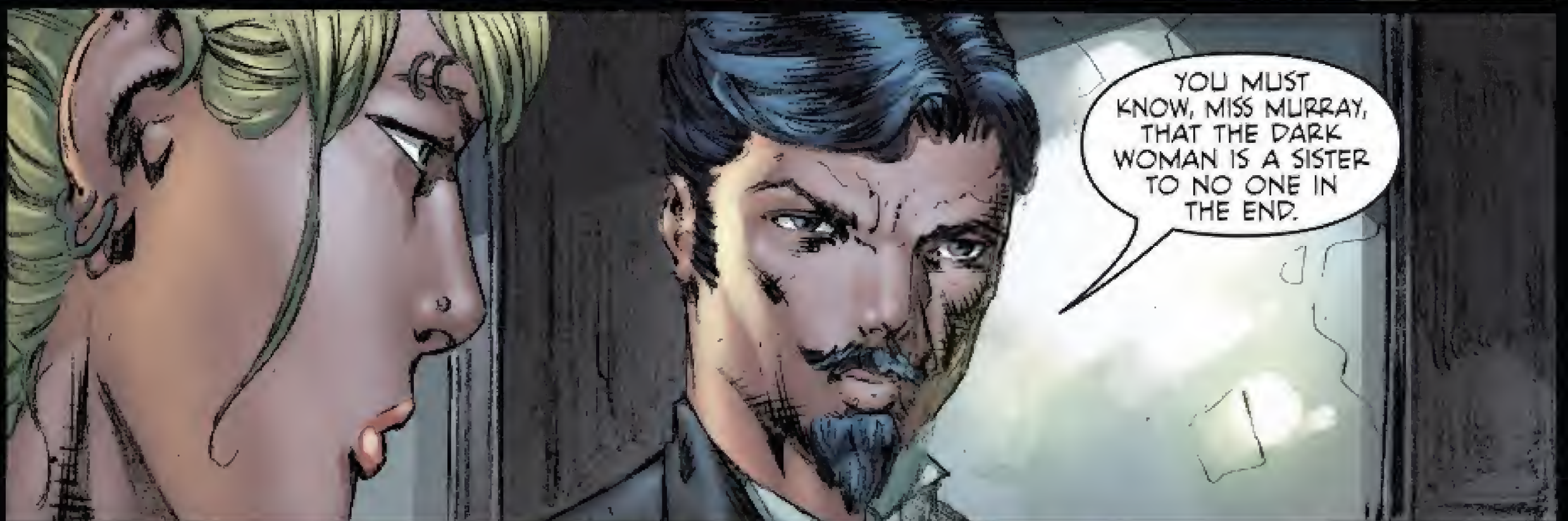
**SHRIIK**

**CHUK**



**KA SPOK**








































YOU'RE **DISGUSTING**,  
YOU KNOW THAT?  
YOU **SICK BASTARD!**  
HOW COULD YOU LET  
THAT HAPPEN? THAT  
POOR **WOMAN--**

--IS A LOYAL  
SERVANT OF THE **CHURCH**,  
AND ONE OF THE **FEW** PEOPLE  
ON EARTH WITH THE **SPIRITUAL**  
**PURITY** NEEDED TO **BEAR** THIS  
UNIQUE BURDEN. THAT IS  
**WHY** THE DEMON TRIED TO  
**AVOID** BEING MERGED  
WITH HER.


THIS IS **OLD**  
**HAT** TO NOVELLA.  
SHE'S BEEN HOUSING  
DEMONS **WITHIN**  
**HERSELF** SINCE SHE  
WAS 17 YEARS  
OLD.




THEN HASN'T  
SHE GIVEN **ENOUGH**?  
WHY NOT LET HER LIVE  
OUT HER **LAST YEARS**  
IN **PEACE**?



LAST YEARS?  
SHE'S BARELY **40**.  
I'LL CONCEDE THAT  
THE **PHYSICAL** TOLL FOR  
HER SERVICE HAS BEEN  
**SIGNIFICANT**, BUT  
WE DO NOT **FORCE**  
HER TO ASSIST  
US.



REFLECT  
ON **THIS**, MISS  
MURRAY:



WE **ALL**  
CARRY OUR **OWN**  
DEMONS, DAY IN  
AND DAY OUT...





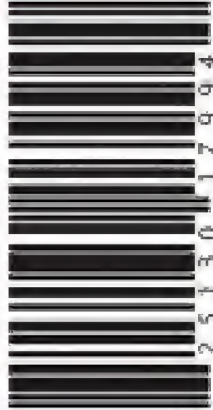


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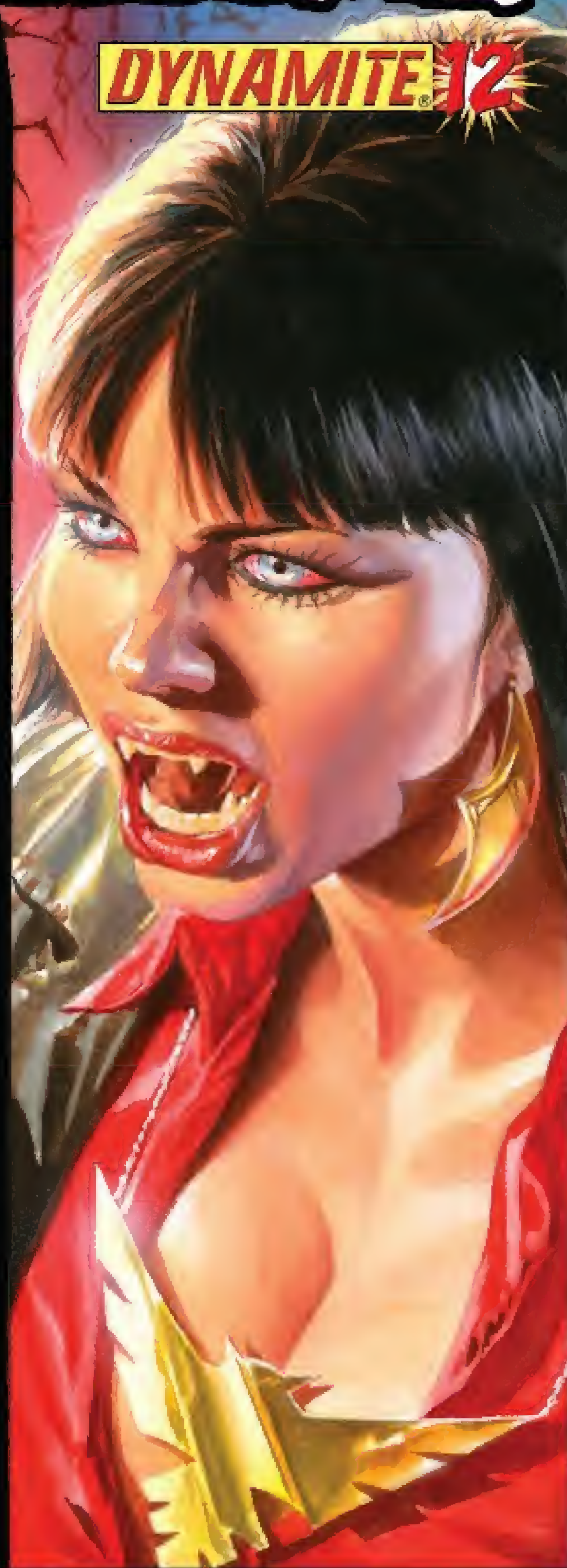
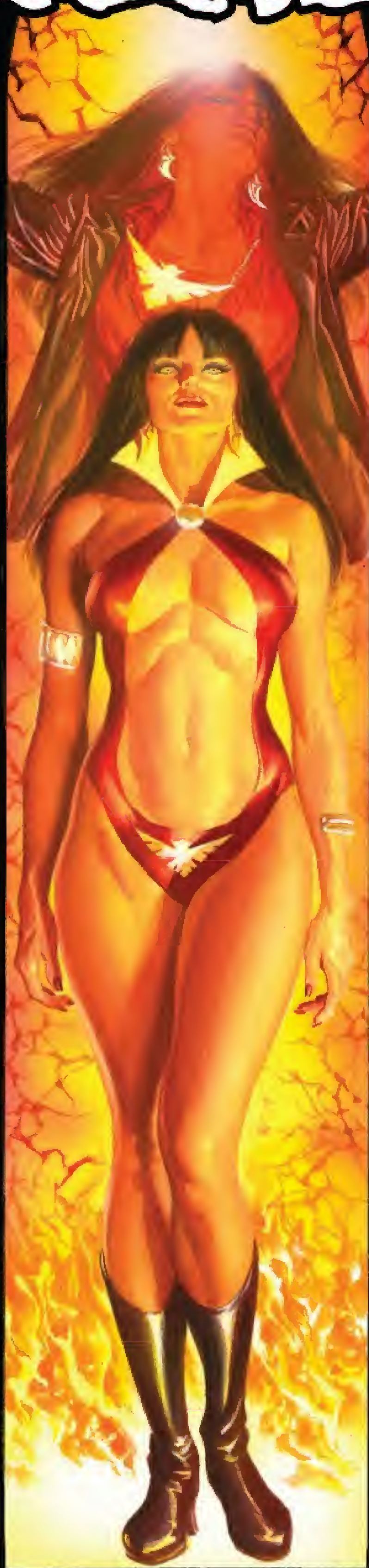


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DYNAMITE 12







«--SHEREMETYEVO  
CONTROL TO  
AEROFLOT  
NINE NINE ONE,  
COME IN--»

«(AE 991,  
RESPOND  
PLEASE.)»

«(NO RESPONSE  
SINCE IT HIT THE  
OUTER MARKER  
BEACON.)»

TRANSLATED FROM RUSSIAN.--J.R.



«(NINE NINE  
ONE, YOU ARE  
NOT CLEARED FOR  
APPROACH--»

«(I'M TELLING  
YOU, YEVGENI,  
SOMETHING'S  
WRONG.)»

«(PROBABLY  
CHECHENS.)»

«--DAMN IT,  
NINE NINE ONE,  
YOU ARE NOT  
CLEARED--»

«--ROLL  
EMERGENCY CREWS,  
RUNWAY SEVEN, GO  
GO GO--»

«--POSSIBLE  
TERRORIST THREAT,  
RUNWAY SEV--»



«(RESPOND,  
NINE NINE  
ONE)»

«--CHECHENS,  
MAYBE? WHO  
GODDAMN  
KNOWS??»

«--BE ADVISED,  
MILITARY SECURITY  
TEAM EN ROUTE--»

«--ANYONE  
HAVE ANY IDEA  
WHAT THE HELL IS  
GOING ON??»



SHEREMETYEVO  
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT  
MOSCOW, RUSSIA  
2015 LOCAL TIME



«MOVE IT  
MOVE IT  
MOVE IT!»

«KEEP THE  
RESCUE CREWS  
BACK UNTIL WE  
SECURE THE  
PLANE!»

«COME TO  
COMMAND,  
CLEAR AT ENTRY  
POINT.»

«MOVING  
(N.)»

«THERMAL  
READ IS  
NEGATIVE»

«SOMETHING  
ON THE WINDOWS.  
CAN'T SEE»

«TEAM ONE,  
THIS IS COLONEL  
YANKIN: ADVISE  
STATUS.»

«(I SAY  
AGAIN, WHAT IS  
YOUR STATUS,  
ONE?)»

«(TRIAGE  
HERE, KEEP THIS  
AREA CLEAR.)»

«(...MERCIFUL  
CHRIST IN HIS  
HEAVEN...)»

«(UH, COLONEL,  
THIS IS DEFINITELY  
NOT A TERRORIST  
INCIDENT...)»

«(WHAT  
ABOUT THE  
PASSENGERS?)»

«(UH, UNKNOWN,  
COLONEL.)»

«(WHAT  
DO YOU MEAN,  
'UNKNOWN'?  
WHERE ARE THEY,  
SERGEANT?)»

«(...NOWHERE,  
SIR.)»

«(EYES OPEN FOR  
TRIPWIRES)»

«(AND  
EVERYWHERE.)»

«(MANIFEST  
SAYS 89  
PASSENGERS)»

**DOOOOT**  
THIS IS  
GENERAL DIRECTOR  
VASILENKO, HERR  
SCHULD.

WE HAVE  
A SITUATION  
HERE...

«(GET THOSE  
BODY BAGS  
READY)»



"...ONE REQUIRING  
**SPECIAL ATTENTION.**"

FOUR HOURS LATER.

FOR THE  
RECORD, I HATE  
IT WHEN YOUR  
PHONE RINGS.

LAST TIME, I ENDED  
UP POSSESSED BY  
A DEMON.

BEFORE THAT,  
CHASED BY BIRD-MONSTER  
YAKUZA-FROM-HELL  
BIKERS.

YOU SAID  
YOU **LIKED**  
TO TRAVEL.

ЗАПРЕТНАЯ ЗОНА.  
НЕ ВХОДИТЬ.

BA-  
DEET  
KA-CHAK

RUSSIA IN  
THE DEAD OF  
WINTER ISN'T  
EXACTLY MY IDEA  
OF A GOOD  
TIME.

NOR  
MINE.

<<--YES, SIR, THE...  
SPECIAL INVESTIGATOR  
HAS ARRIVED-->>

<<I AM  
AWARE OF MY  
DUTIES, SIR.>>

I AM GENERAL  
DIRECTOR  
**VASILENKO**, AND  
THE SAFETY OF THIS  
FACILITY IS MY  
RESPONSIBILITY.

SNAP

THAT WAS MY  
PRESIDENT, WITH THE  
REASSURING MESSAGE THAT  
IF THIS...**INCIDENT** IS NOT  
RESOLVED IMMEDIATELY,  
MY BOLLOCKS ARE  
FORFEIT.

SO. LET  
US GET TO  
WORK.



THEY'RE TERRIFIED. LITTLE MEN ACCUSTOMED TO WIELDING AUTHORITY, NOW FORCED TO CONFRONT REAL, AND TERRIBLE, POWER.

"--NO RADIO CALLS FROM THE PLANE, BUT IT LANDED JUST FINE."

"VANKIN'S MEN SECURED THE SITE IMMEDIATELY."

JESUS, IT'S FREEZING. AREN'T YOU COLD?

"NO ONE HAS DEBARKED. WHICH IS, OF COURSE, IMPOSSIBLE."

CONSTANTLY.

WHATEVER HAPPENED HERE SCARED HIM ENOUGH TO CALL HIS SUPERIORS, WHO IN TURN MADE CALLS OF THEIR OWN.

LET'S GO.

UNTIL WORD REACHED MY BENEFACTORS.

THEN ANOTHER CALL IS MADE.

YOU MIGHT WANT TO STAY HERE, SOFIA.

SNFF



CALLS THAT SEND  
US INTO SOMEONE'S  
NIGHTMARE.

THIS IS  
GOING TO  
BE A BAD  
ONE.

FORGET IT.  
I'M HALF  
FROZEN, VEE.  
WAIT FOR  
M--

--ME.

JESUS.

ALL THAT  
BLOOD.

VEE? WHERE...  
WHERE ARE THE  
BODIES?







GOOD  
QUESTION.

THE AIR IS  
PERFUMED WITH  
THE SCENT OF  
COPPER.



MAKING ME  
GIDDY, ALMOST  
LIGHTHEADED.

GO CHECK  
THE COCKPIT.



BUT UNDERNEATH,  
I SMELL ROTTING  
MEAT.



THE RUSSIANS WERE  
WORRIED ABOUT  
TERRORISTS--CHECHEN  
REBELS, OR RELIGIOUS  
EXTREMISTS.

BUT WHATEVER  
DID THIS...

DARK  
MOTHER.







SEE YOU SOON,  
VAMPIRELLA

YOU  
WERE *RIGHT*.  
I SHOULD  
HAVE STAYED  
OUTSIDE.

SCHULD.

IT'S  
ME.

AND?

WE NEED  
TO TALK, HERR  
SCHULD.

I'LL  
SEND A  
CAR.





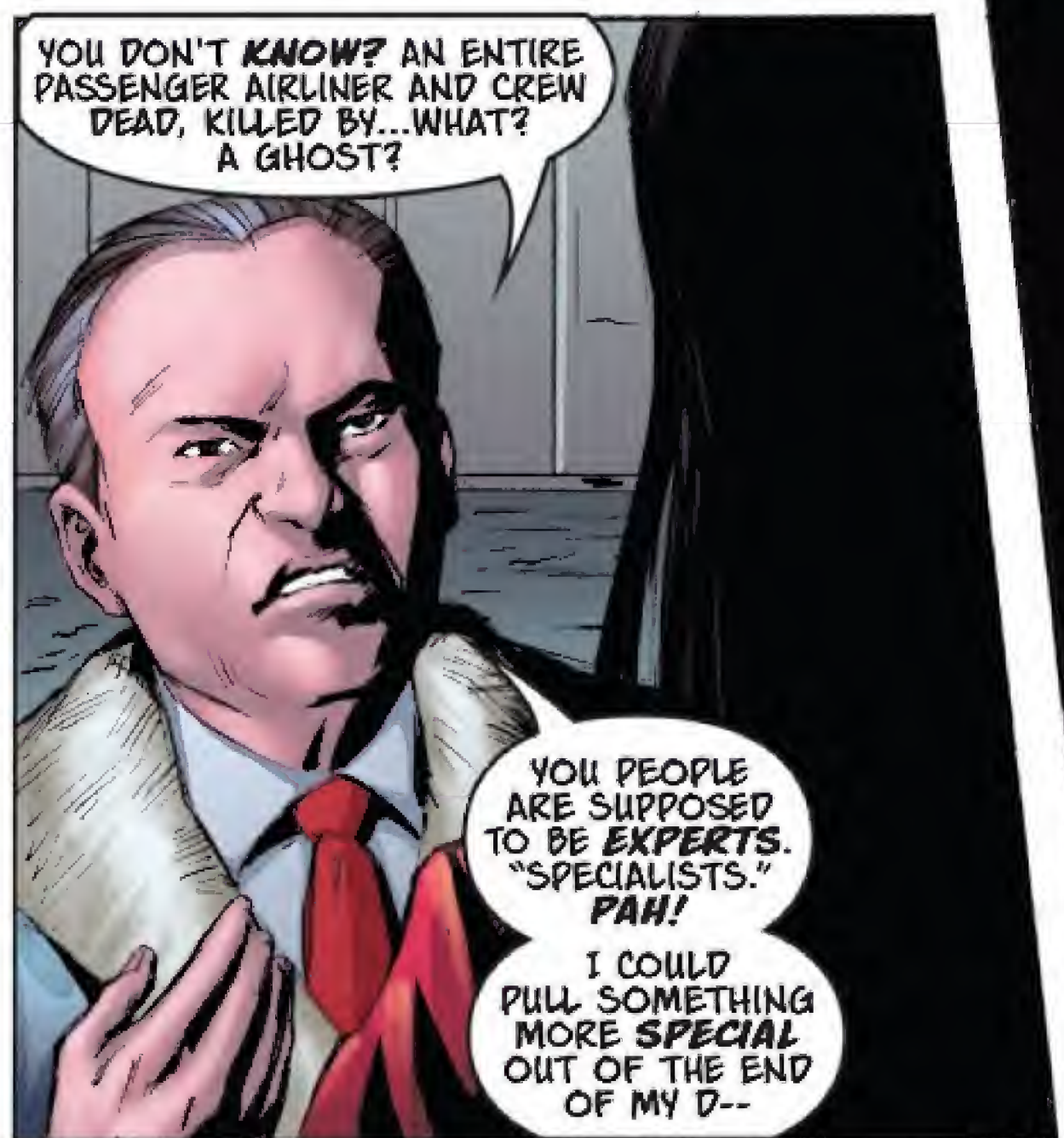
WELL?  
WHAT WAS IT?  
WHAT DID YOU  
FIND?

A MASSACRE.



WHAT...  
WHAT KILLED  
THEM? WHO  
DID THIS?

I DON'T  
KNOW YET.



YOU DON'T *KNOW*? AN ENTIRE  
PASSENGER AIRLINER AND CREW  
DEAD, KILLED BY...WHAT?  
A GHOST?

YOU PEOPLE  
ARE SUPPOSED  
TO BE *EXPERTS*.  
"SPECIALISTS."  
*PAH!*

I COULD  
PULL SOMETHING  
MORE *SPECIAL*  
OUT OF THE END  
OF MY D--



COMRADE  
VASILENKO.

PERHAPS  
YOU'D PREFER  
TO SOLVE THIS  
PROBLEM WITHOUT  
OUR HELP.

...NO.

THEN STEP  
ASIDE...



...AND LET  
ME GET BACK  
TO WORK.

SO...  
WHAT DO  
WE DO  
NOW?

YOU HOSE  
OUT THE PLANE,  
I SUPPOSE.

I CALL THE  
PRESIDENT AND  
SAY GOODBYE TO  
MY *BOLLOCKS*.



HOTEL BALTSHUG KEMPINSKI  
MOSCOW  
0130 LOCAL TIME

WOW.

THIS IS  
VERY NOT  
BAD.

THESE  
BENEFACTORS  
OF YOURS  
DON'T SKIMP,  
DO THEY?

NO. NOT  
USUALLY.

WELCOME.  
MAY I BE OF  
ASSISTANCE?

YOU SHOULD HAVE  
A ROOM FOR MY  
ASSOCIATE  
AND I?

UNDER  
WHAT NAME,  
PLEASE?

**NORMANDY.**  
MISS  
NORMANDY.

YOU GET  
A **CODENAME?**  
I WANT A  
CODENAME.

AH, OF  
COURSE,  
MADAM.


WE HAVE BOOKED YOU IN  
THE KREMLIN SUITE.  
AND YOU'LL BE  
PLEASED TO LEARN THAT  
MR. NORMANDY HAS  
ALREADY CHECKED  
IN ALREADY.

"MR.  
NORMANDY?"  
WHO THE HELL  
IS THAT?

WAIT  
HERE.

**MR.  
NORMANDY**  
AND I WILL  
PROBABLY NEED  
SOME **ALONE**  
TIME.






I'M SUPPOSED TO  
BE A HUNTER.

BUT EVER SINCE WE  
SET FOOT IN RUSSIA,  
I'VE FELT LIKE I'M  
ONE STEP BEHIND.

THE KILLER'S  
MESSAGE TO ME.

AND NOW, SOMEONE  
WAITING FOR ME IN THE  
HOTEL, AWARE OF AN ALIAS  
I HAVEN'T USED IN YEARS.



STILL, IT WOULD  
BE RUDE NOT  
TO SAY HELLO.





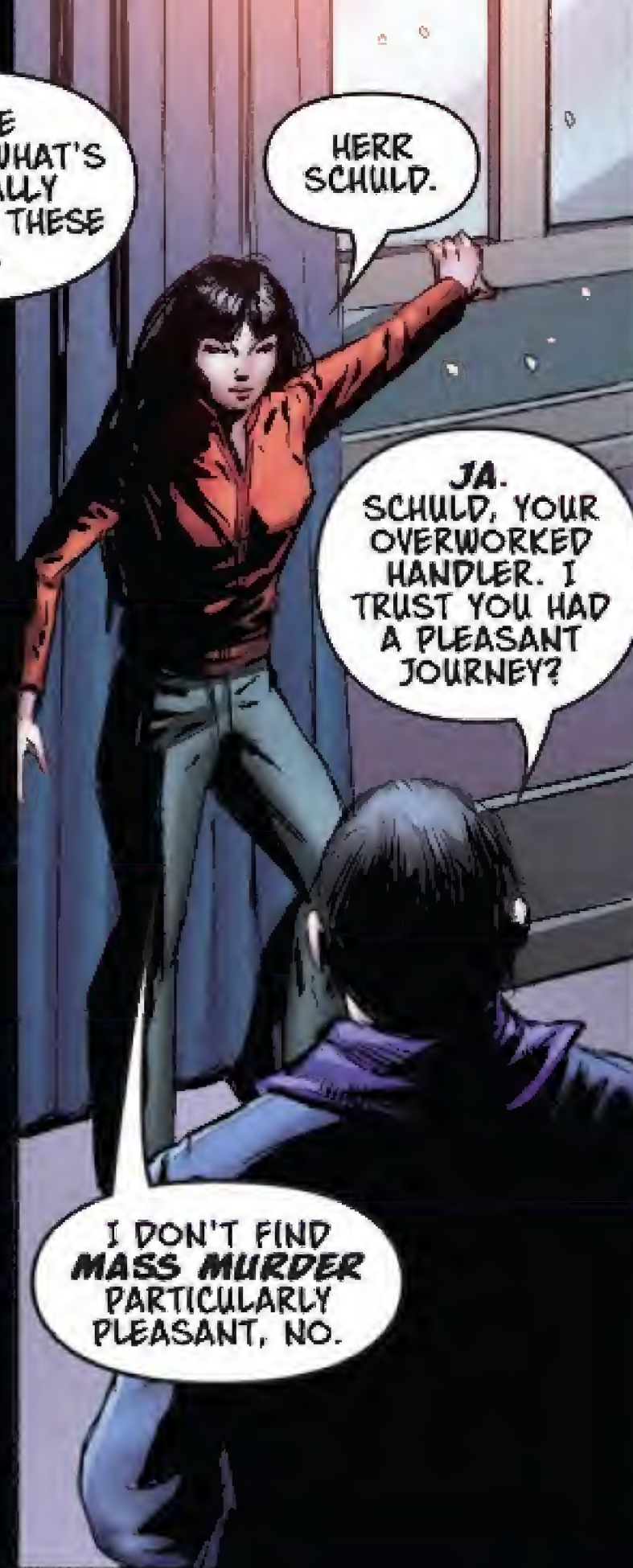
MR.  
NORMANDY,  
I PRESUME.





MISS NORMANDY.  
OR IS THAT *MS.*  
NORMANDY?

I LOSE  
TRACK OF WHAT'S  
POLITICALLY  
*CORRECT* THESE  
DAYS.



HERR  
SCHULD.

JA.  
SCHULD, YOUR  
OVERWORKED  
HANDLER. I  
TRUST YOU HAD  
A PLEASANT  
JOURNEY?

I DON'T FIND  
*MASS MURDER*  
PARTICULARLY  
PLEASANT, NO.



I EXPECT  
NOT.

I BROUGHT  
YOU SOME  
NEW TOYS.



FORTUNATE THAT YOU AND YOUR  
LOVELY ASSISTANT--

*SOFIA*,  
IS IT?

--HAD  
NOT YET LEFT  
*GERMANY\**  
WHEN DIRECTOR  
VASILENKO  
CONTACTED  
ME.

I ENVY YOU.  
IT'S BEEN TOO LONG  
SINCE I VISITED MY  
HOMELAND. BUT YOU  
KNOW ME. WORK,  
WORK, WORK.




I SEE  
YOU'VE BEEN  
*BUSY*.

HA!

IDLE  
HANDS ARE  
THE DEVIL'S  
WORKSHOP, MY  
DEAR GIRL.

\*SEE VAMPIRELLA #11--J.R.






SO? THE AIRPORT?


WHATEVER HIT THE AIRPLANE WASN'T HUMAN. AND IT KNEW I WAS COMING. IT LEFT ME A MESSAGE: "SEE YOU SOON, VAMPIRELLA."

AH. I SEE.



THEN YOU SHOULD SEE **GRIGORIY**.


IF IT GOES BUMP IN THE NIGHT, AND IT'S IN RUSSIA, GRIGORIY KNOWS ABOUT IT.



YOU'LL FIND HIM HERE. I'LL ARRANGE YOUR TRANSPORT WITHIN THE HOUR.

THIS **GRIGORIY** IS ANOTHER ONE OF YOUR... INVESTIGATORS?

STRICTLY SPEAKING, NO. BUT WE HAVE AN **UNDERSTANDING**.



NOT TERRIBLY DIFFERENT THAN OUR ARRANGEMENT, "MISS NORMANDY."

DO GIVE MY REGARDS TO SOFIA. I'LL SHOW MYSELF OUT.





OUTSKIRTS OF TVERSKAYA  
OBLAST, RUSSIA  
167 KM NORTHWEST  
OF MOSCOW  
0330 LOCAL TIME



GAH.

HEY, CAN YOU  
ASK YOUR SECRET EVIL  
OVERLORDS OR WHOEVER  
THEY ARE TO SEND US  
SOMEPLACE **WARM**  
NEXT TIME?

THEY HAVE  
MONSTERS IN  
**FIJI**, RIGHT?



I'M SURE  
THEY DO,  
SOFIA.

IN MY  
EXPERIENCE, THEY  
HAVE MONSTERS  
**EVERYWHERE.**





THIS IS THE PLACE.

CHARMING.

THIS GRIGORIY GUY HAS A REAL EYE FOR REAL ESTATE.



WE'RE HERE. WHERE IS HE?

THERE'S NOTHING OUT HERE BUT SNOW AND--

AAH JEEESUS!



...MY WHAT BIG EYES YOU HAVE...

GRRRRR



RRRRR





WELCOME,  
MY FRIENDS!  
WELCOME!



YOU  
MUST BE--MISS  
NORMANDY,  
IS IT

I WOULD HAVE  
THOUGHT YOU  
HAD A DIFFERENT  
NAME. YOU  
SEEM QUITE...  
**FAMILIAR.**

NO MATTER,  
NO MATTER.



YOU  
MUSTN'T PAY  
THE BEASTS  
ANY MIND.

THEY **LOOK**  
FEROCIOUS, BUT  
FOR THE MOST  
PART, THEY'RE  
GENTLE AS  
**LAMBS.**

FOR THE  
MOST PART.  
**HA!**





OUR MUTUAL FRIEND, HERR SCHULD, SENDS HIS RESPECTS.



GOOD OLD SCHULD. HE SENDS YOU TO ME BECAUSE OF THE UNFORTUNATE BUSINESS ON THE PLANE IN MOSCOW, YES?

YES, GRIGORIY KNOWS **ALL** ABOUT IT. "GRIGORIY" MEANS "VIGILANT" IN RUSSIAN. DID YOU KNOW THAT?



BUT FIRST, YOU MUST INTRODUCE ME TO YOUR **DELIGHTFUL** LITTLE FRIEND.

**SOFIA**, YES? HELLOOO, LITTLE SOFIA. GRIGORIY **LIKES** NEW FRIENDS, HA HA!

UH, HI.



PERHAPS, IN ALL YOUR **VIGILANCE**, YOU LEARNED WHAT ATTACKED THE PLANE.



WELL, YOU KNOW HOW IT IS.

ONE HEARS MUCH, IF ONE **LISTENS**.

STILL, INFORMATION LIKE THIS? NOT EASY TO COME BY.





IF YOU KNOW SCHULD, YOU KNOW PAYMENT ISN'T AN ISSUE.

HA! NO, THAT'S TRUE. SCHULD IS VERY CONCERNED WITH PAYING HIS DEBTS, YES.

AND IF YOU KNOW GRIGORIY, YOU KNOW HE ALWAYS HAS ANSWERS!

NAMES, LOCATIONS. JUST LIKE *THIS* ONE.

A BLOOD CULT. MUCH MORE ACTIVE IN RUSSIA, YES? ESPECIALLY SINCE SOMETHING MAJOR HAPPENED A FEW MONTHS AGO? IN SEATTLE?\*

\*SEE VAMPIRELLA: CROWN OF WORMS.--J.R.



IF YOU KNOW SCHULD, YOU KNOW PAYMENT ISN'T AN ISSUE.

GIVE ME THE NAME.



OH NO. NO, NO NO NO.


FIRST, WE TALK ABOUT GRIGORIY'S PAYMENT.

YOU SEE, GRIGORIY THINKS MAYBE "MISS NORMANDY" IS MORE VALUABLE TO PEOPLE DEAD, YOU SEE.



MAYBE MISS NORMANDY IS A LOT HARDER TO KILL THAN YOU THINK.





MAYBE SO,  
MAYBE NOT.

BUT GRIGORIY  
DID NOT **CLAW** HIS  
WAY OUT OF HELL JUST  
TO LET THE LIKES OF  
**YOU** SEND HIM  
BACK.

SCHULD  
THINKS I'M A FOOL,  
YES? SENDING  
ONE HELLBORN TO  
KILL ANOTHER?

I THINK NOT,  
**VAMPIRELLA.**

NO,  
I THINK  
**NOT.**

**TO BE CONTINUED**



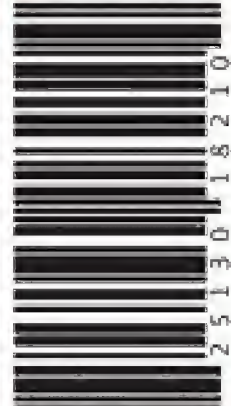
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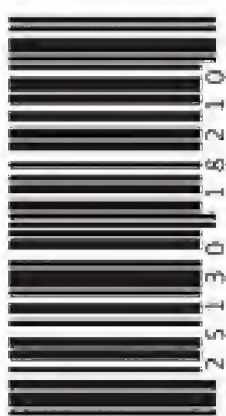
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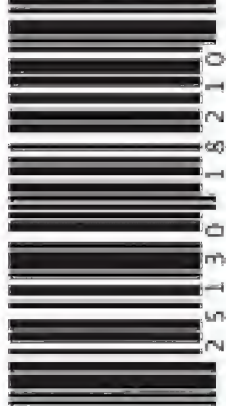


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— *Sanza* —  
Vinicius  
Andrade







OUTSKIRTS OF TVERSKAYA  
OBLAST, RUSSIA  
167 KM NORTHWEST OF MOSCOW  
0345 LOCAL TIME

TELL  
THEM TO  
BACK OFF,  
GRIGORY.

DO IT  
NOW.

HMPH.

NO, NO.

NOT FOR YOU TO  
BE GIVING ORDERS,  
MAKING DEMANDS,  
LITTLE HELLCHILD.

UNLESS  
YOU WANT TO  
SEE YOUR PLUCKY  
LITTLE PET TORN  
IN HALF, YES?

--GET OFF  
ME, YOU SONS  
OF B--

EVENTS JUST MIGHT  
BE SPINNING A LITTLE  
OUT OF CONTROL.

WE CAME TO YOU IN  
GOOD FAITH, GRIGORY.  
SCHULD SENT US,  
AND YOU KNOW  
WHO AND WHAT HE  
REPRESENTS.

HA! I'M A DEMON,  
VAMPIRELLA. WHAT  
POSSIBLE USE  
IS "GOOD FAITH"  
TO ME?

SCHULD MAY  
HAVE MONEY AND  
RESOURCES, BUT  
HE USES THEM TO KILL  
MY KIND, WITH YOU  
AS HIS WEAPON.

AAAAH!

HIS DEADLIEST  
WEAPON, GRIGORY.  
IF I WERE HERE FOR  
YOU, YOU'D BE  
BACK IN THE PIT  
ALREADY.

OF COURSE,  
YOU COULD  
LET HER  
GO.

AND IF  
YOU DO, WELL...  
I'D OWE YOU  
A FAVOR,  
WOULDN'T I?

...YES. YES,  
I SUPPOSE YOU  
WOULD.





VERY WELL.  
BOYS!  
RELEASE  
HER.

JERKS.  
NEXT TIME, I'M  
GONNA **NEUTER**  
YOU.

GRAARRA

GARRA

ENOUGH  
FOREPLAY.

YOU KNOW  
WHY WE'RE  
HERE.

A KILLER HAS  
JUST ARRIVED  
IN RUSSIA.

WHAT OF IT?  
THIS COUNTRY  
BREEDS SERIAL  
KILLERS LIKE  
WEEDS.

NOT LIKE  
THIS ONE.

AND  
WHAT MAKES  
THIS ONE SO  
SPECIAL?

"SEE YOU  
SOON, VAMPIRELLA."  
SCRAWLED IN THE  
BLOOD OF HIS  
VICTIMS.





COME, BOYS!

I'VE HEARD OF THIS ONE. HE'S SPECIAL, YOUR NEW FRIEND.

SLUPP



"KILLED THE PASSENGERS AND PILOTS OF A MOSCOW-BOUND FLIGHT, LEFT THEM STUFFED IN THE CARRY-ON BINS, LANDED THE PLANE AND GOT AWAY..."

"AND NO ONE SAW HIM COME OR GO. NO ONE EXCEPT GRIGORIY, NATURALLY."



ENOUGH, HELLSPAWN.

MY PATIENCE ISN'T LIMITLESS--



HRAARRRR



NOR IS MINE.

REST ASSURED, WHEN I DEMAND REPAYMENT OF THE DEBT YOU OWE ME FOR THIS, YOU'LL REGRET EVER LAYING HANDS ON ME.



"HIS NAME WAS  
VAIRO, A CATHOLIC  
BISHOP FROM  
POUZZOLES, IN 1538."

"THE YEAR OF  
OUR LORD."



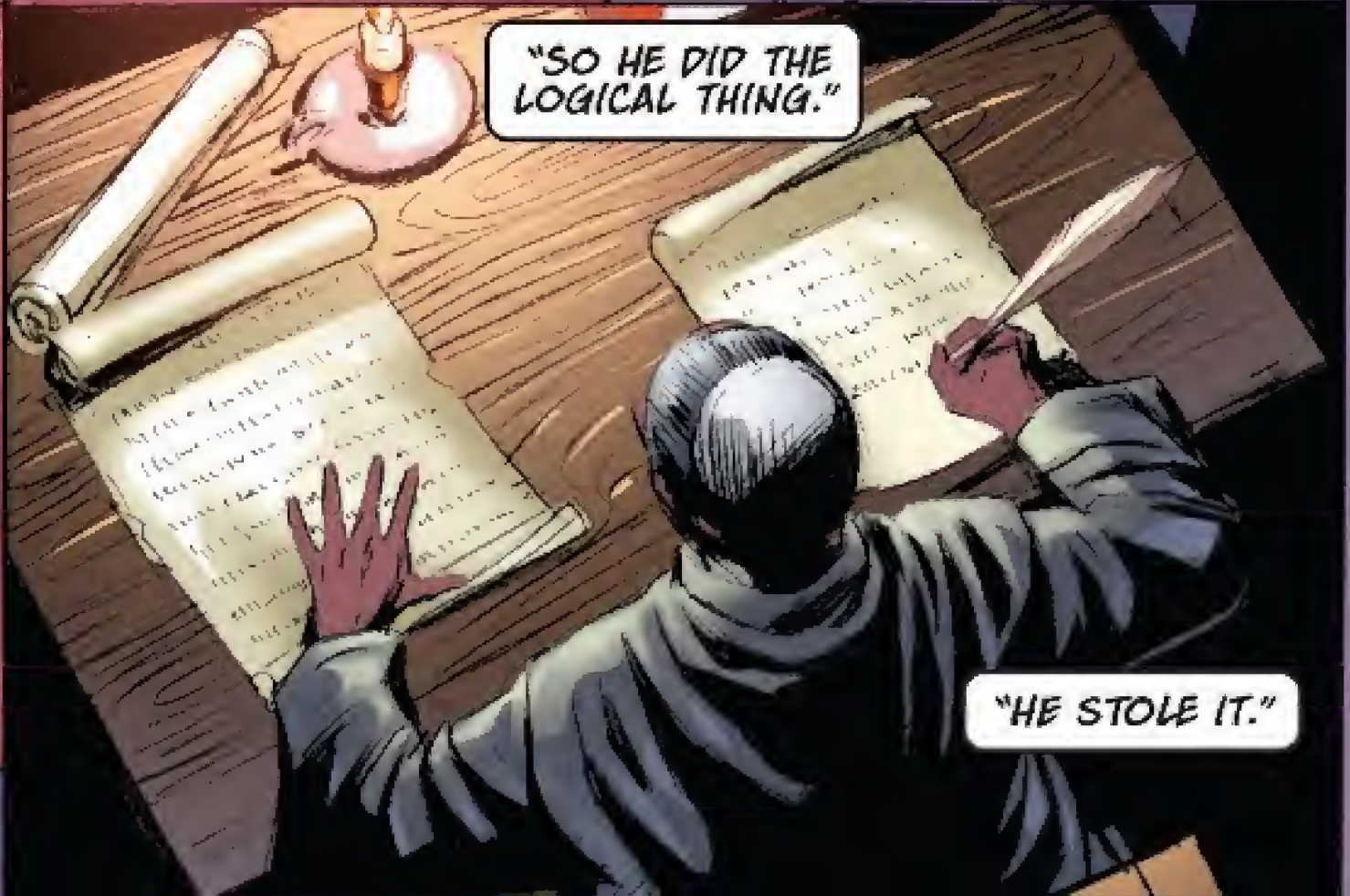
"AN EXPERT OCCULTIST  
WAS OUR GOOD BISHOP,  
THE AUTHOR OF AN EARLY  
GRIMOIRE, *DE FASCINO  
DE LIBRE TRES*."



"ONE OF THE FIRST  
HUMANS TO TRULY  
UNDERSTAND THE LURE  
OF HELL, THE  
'FASCINATION,' AS HE  
CALLED IT, OF EVIL."



"BUT NOT THE LAST. ONE OF  
VAIRO'S PRIESTS, DOMENICO  
GIACOMINI, ENVIED HIS  
BISHOP'S TALENTS AND THE  
ATTENTION HIS WORK  
RECEIVED FROM ROME."



"SO HE DID THE  
LOGICAL THING."

"HE STOLE IT."

IT'S A NEW  
CHAPTER OF AN  
OLD STORY,  
VAMPIRELLA.

NO HUMAN  
KILLER COULD  
HAVE DONE  
WHAT YOURS  
DID.

NOT  
WITHOUT...  
ASSISTANCE.





"BUT HE DID MORE THAN THAT. HE IMPROVED UPON IT, CONSTRUCTING APOCRYPHA BEYOND VAIRO'S NARROW WORKS."



"WHERE VAIRO DEFINED THE POWER OF HELL'S FASCINATION, GIACOMINI WAS DETERMINED TO USE THAT POWER FOR HIS OWN ENDS."

"GATHERING LIKE-MINDED CLERGY, HE FORMED IL CONSIGLIO DEI VERMI-- THE COUNCIL OF WORMS."



"AND THEY SUMMONED A DEMON."

"THE COUNCIL SURVIVED IN SECRET FOR NEARLY A HUNDRED YEARS, THE APOCRYPHA PASSING FROM PRIEST TO PRIEST."



"UNTIL POPE CLEMENT X LEARNED OF THE CABAL OF BLASPHEMERS WITHIN HIS RANKS, AND TOOK DRAMATIC ACTION."

"THEY WERE CALLED CESTUS DEI--THE FIST OF GOD--AND THEY ANSWERED ONLY TO THE PONTIFF."



"AND, IN THE HILLS ABOVE POZZOLES, THEY TRACKED DOWN THE COUNCIL OF WORMS, AND KILLED THEM."

"ALL SAVE ONE, WHO MANAGED TO SKULK OFF INTO THE NIGHT, NEVER TO BE SEEN AGAIN."



"AND GIACOMINI'S WORKS WERE BELIEVED TO BE DESTROYED BY CESTUS DEI."





YEAH, THIS IS WHY I DON'T WATCH THE **HISTORY CHANNEL**.

WHAT DOES ANY OF THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE BASTARD WHO BUTCHERED THE PEOPLE ON THE PLANE?



YOUR KILLER ACHIEVED HIS BLOODY MASTERPIECE WITH THE AID OF KNOWLEDGE FROM GIACOMINI'S APOCRYPHA.

GAH!



THE APOCRYPHA WASN'T DESTROYED, WAS IT?

OF COURSE NOT. CESTUS DEI PUT MUCH OF IT TO THE TORCH, BUT FRAGMENTS REMAIN, SCATTERED AROUND THE GLOBE.

AND YOUR BOY HAS STUDIED AT LEAST SOME OF THOSE REMAINS.



A REMORSELESS KILLER WHO CAN TRAFFIC WITH DEMONS, LOOKING FOR THE REMAINING PASSAGES OF THE APOCRYPHA.

AH, IT WARMS THE HEART. BUT LEAVE IT TO GRIGORIY.



I MIGHT JUST KNOW WHERE THE NEAREST FRAGMENT IS...



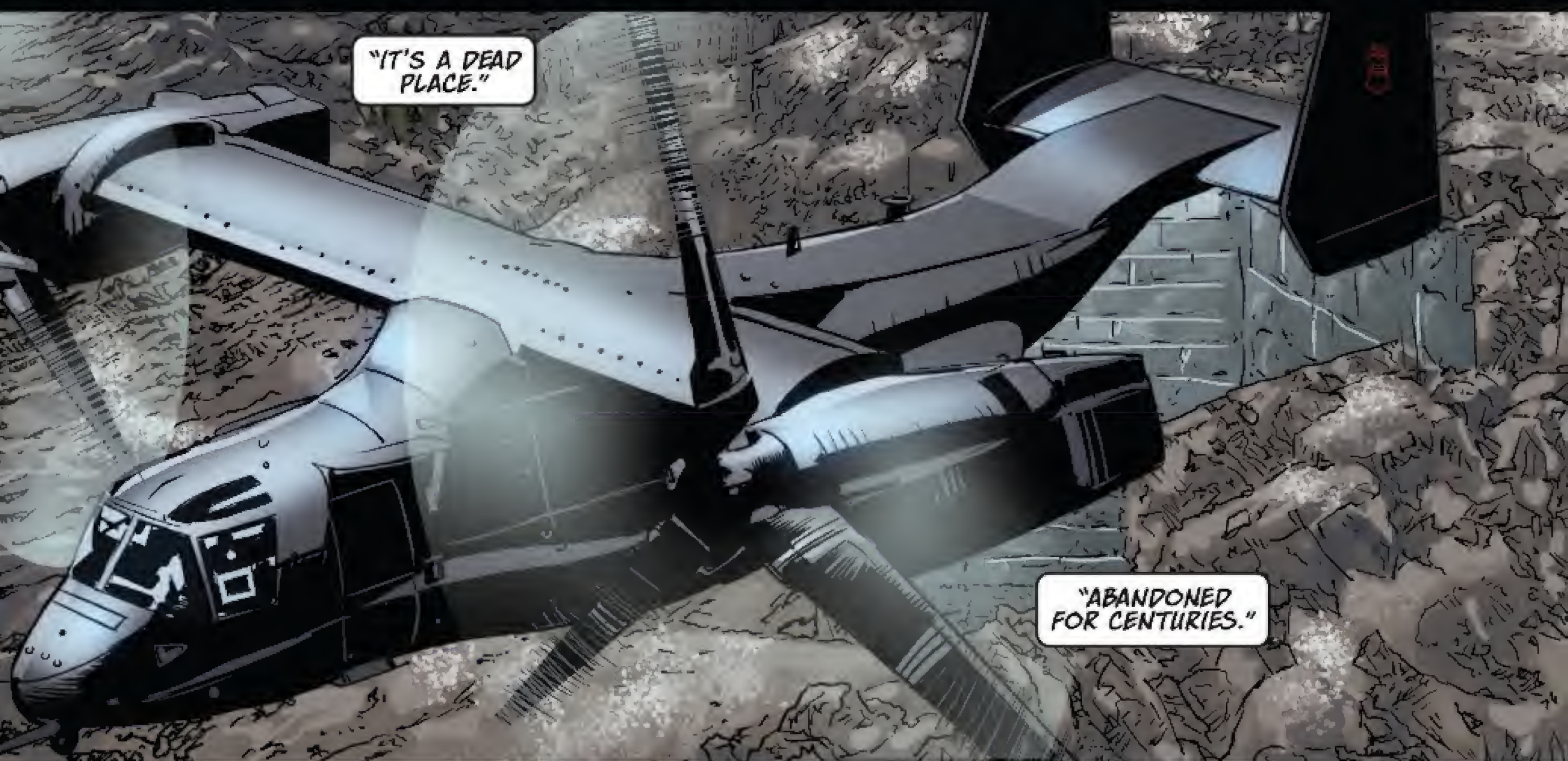
...AND I'M SURE YOU'RE DYING FOR ME TO TELL YOU, YES?



TURKEY/ARMENIA BORDER REGION  
APPROX. 45KM SE OF KARS, TURKEY  
8,000 FEET, DESCENDING  
0540 LOCAL TIME

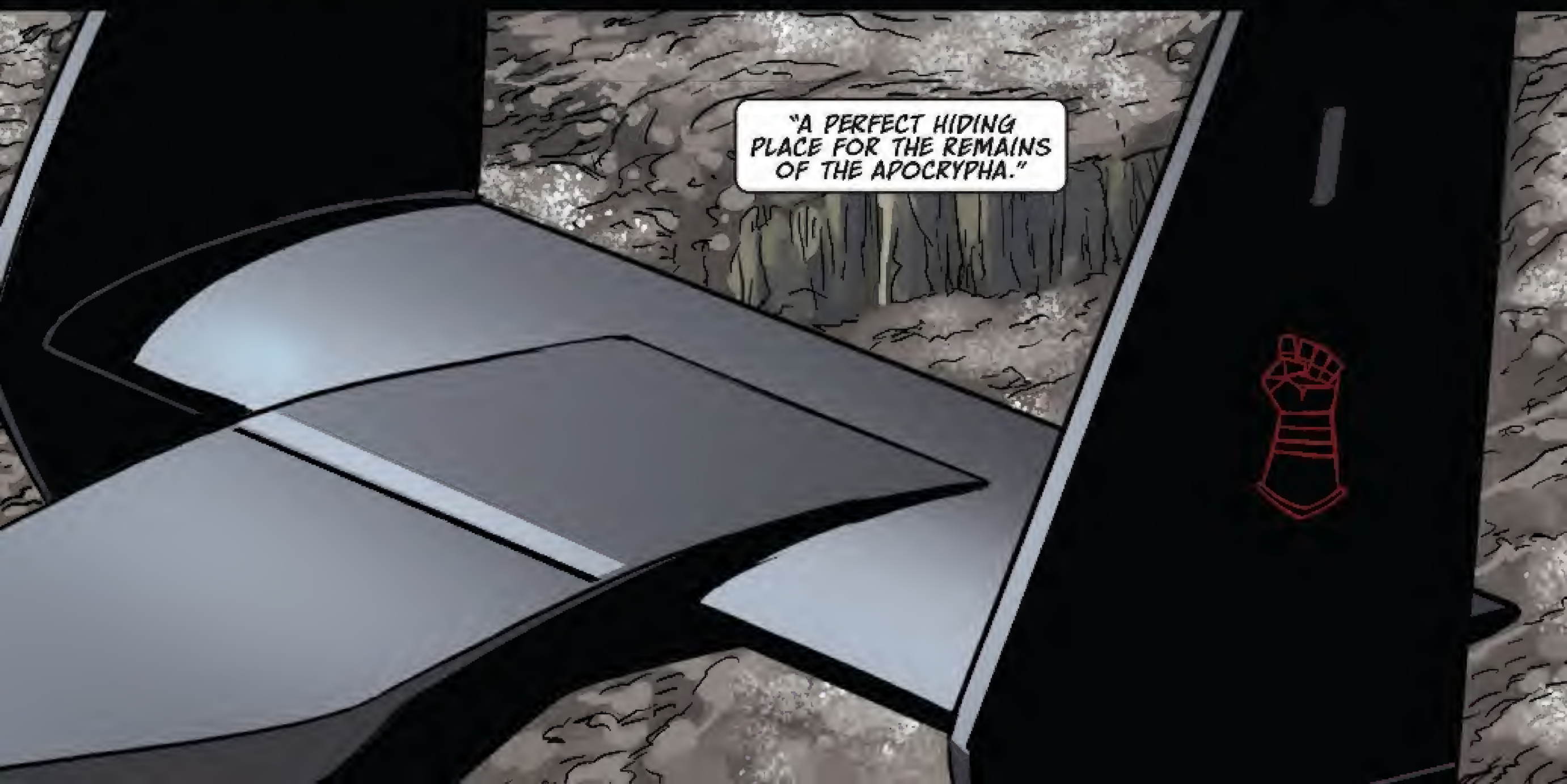


"IT'S A DEAD  
PLACE."



"ABANDONED  
FOR CENTURIES."

"A PERFECT HIDING  
PLACE FOR THE REMAINS  
OF THE APOCRYPHA."







NO GOOD  
CAN COME  
OF THIS.

SO YOU'VE  
SAID. SEVERAL  
TIMES.

IT'S WORTH  
REPEATING.



CHAK

MAYBE  
YOU SHOULD'VE  
STAYED IN MOSCOW,  
SCHULD. YOU USUALLY  
LEAVE THE BLOODY  
WORK TO OTHERS.



PERHAPS.



SO WHY  
DIDN'T YOU STAY  
BEHIND?

A GOOD  
QUESTION,  
CHILD.

I DISLIKE  
FIELDWORK  
TREMENDOUSLY.



BUT **NEITHER** OF  
YOU READ MEDIEVAL  
ITALIAN, NOR SPEAK  
ANY OF THE LOCAL  
LANGUAGES.

AND I HAVE A...  
**FEELING**.  
THAT I NEEDED  
TO COME.

SO, HERE  
I AM.

Gulp





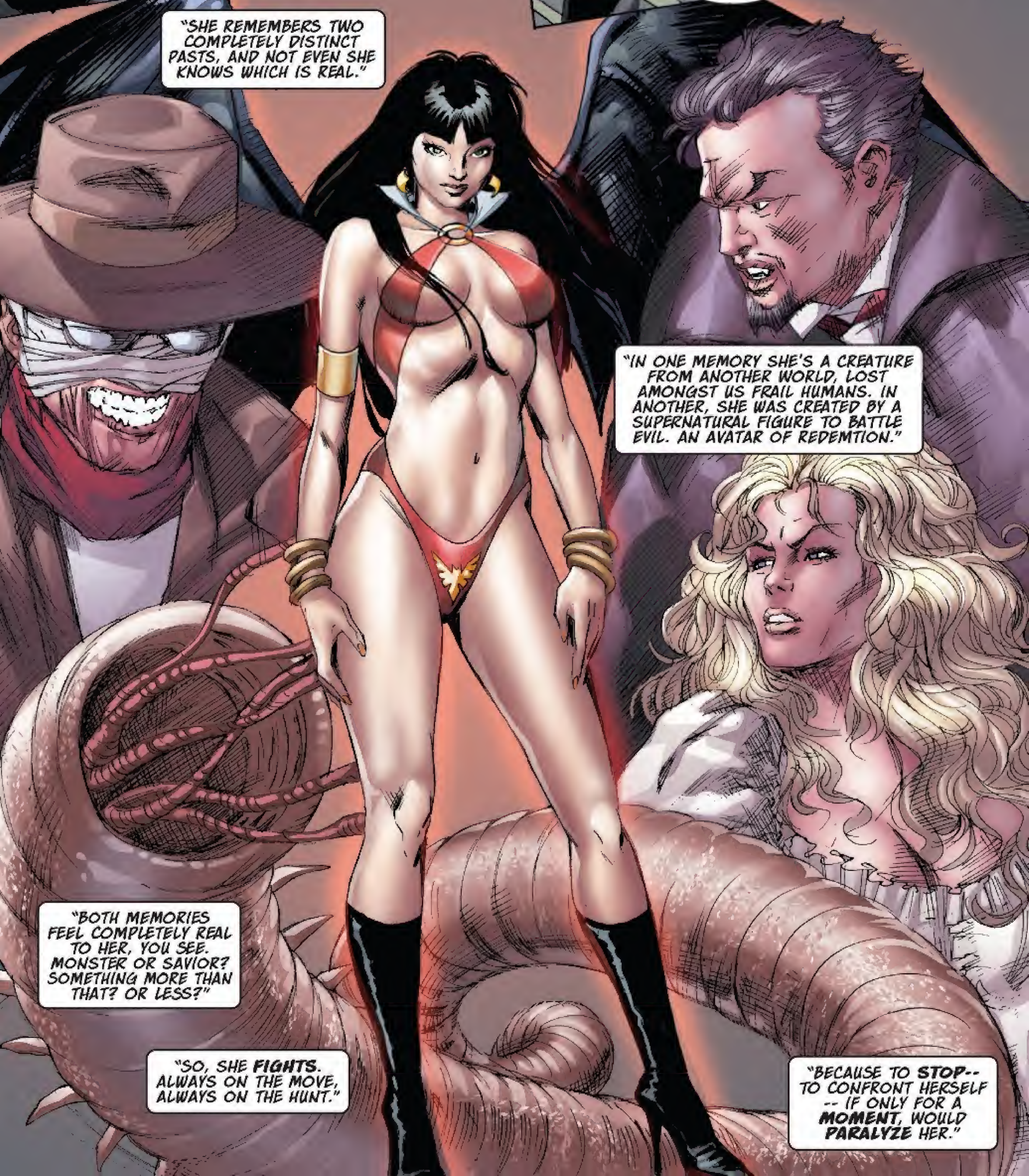
SO WHAT'S HER STORY, PADRE? SHE WON'T TELL ME ANYTHING. WHAT IS SHE?

ANOTHER EXCELLENT QUESTION.



THE HARD TRUTH IS THAT SHE DOESN'T KNOW WHO SHE IS OR WHERE SHE REALLY CAME FROM.

CAN YOU IMAGINE? IT WOULD DRIVE MOST PEOPLE UTTERLY INSANE.



"SHE REMEMBERS TWO COMPLETELY DISTINCT PASTS, AND NOT EVEN SHE KNOWS WHICH IS REAL."

"IN ONE MEMORY SHE'S A CREATURE FROM ANOTHER WORLD, LOST AMONGST US FRAIL HUMANS. IN ANOTHER, SHE WAS CREATED BY A SUPERNATURAL FIGURE TO BATTLE EVIL. AN AVATAR OF REDEMPTION."

"BOTH MEMORIES FEEL COMPLETELY REAL TO HER, YOU SEE. MONSTER OR SAVIOR? SOMETHING MORE THAN THAT? OR LESS?"

"SO, SHE FIGHTS. ALWAYS ON THE MOVE, ALWAYS ON THE HUNT."

"BECAUSE TO STOP-- TO CONFRONT HERSELF -- IF ONLY FOR A MOMENT, WOULD PARALYZE HER."





AND SHE  
WOULD BE LOST  
FOREVER.

JESUS.

SHE THINKS  
SHE'S A MONSTER,  
YOU SEE. AND  
PERHAPS SHE  
IS.



BUT, IN SPITE  
OF IT ALL, SHE'S A  
GOOD PERSON,  
CHILD.

AND SHE'S  
LUCKY TO HAVE  
YOU AS A  
FRIEND.

NOW, I SENSE  
WE'RE ALMOST  
TO OUR  
DESTINATION...

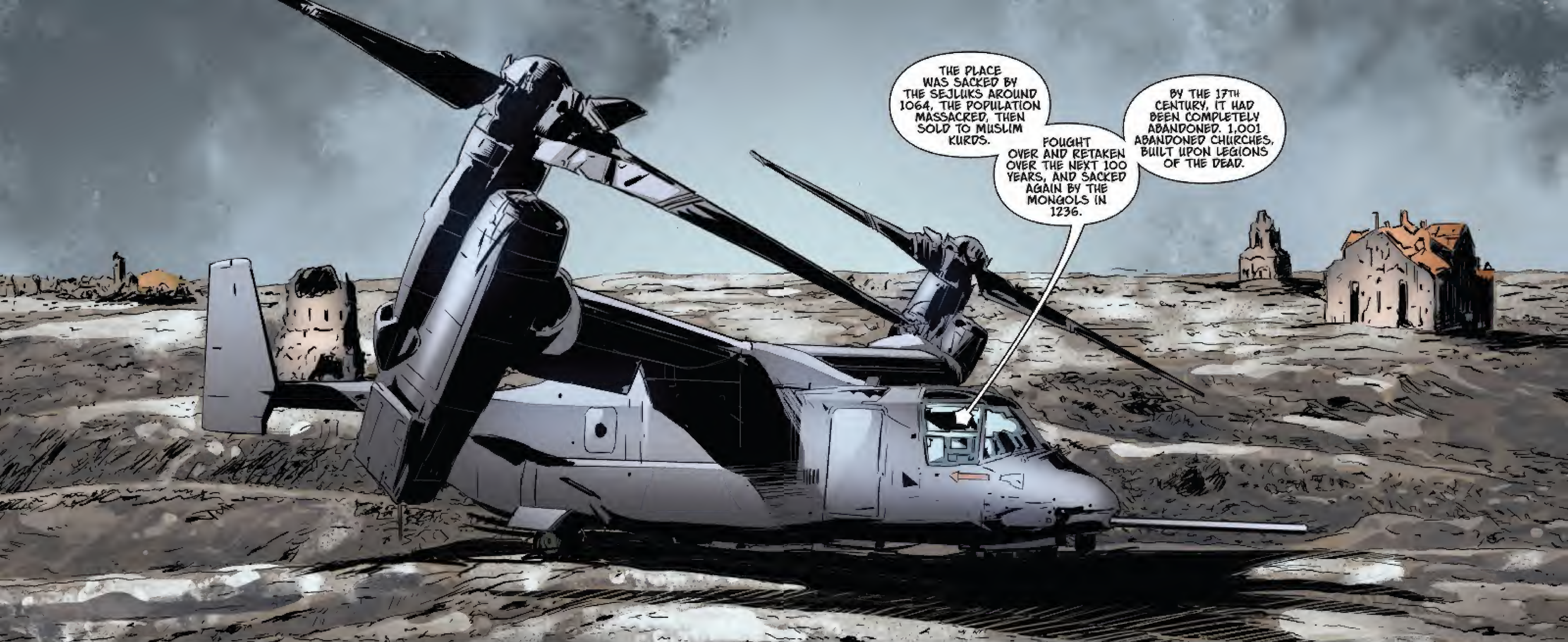
"THIS MIGHT BE A  
GOOD TIME FOR A  
QUICK PRAYER."











THE PLACE WAS SACKED BY THE SEJLUKS AROUND 1064, THE POPULATION MASSACRED, THEN SOLD TO MUSLIM KURDS.

FOUGHT OVER AND RETAKEN OVER THE NEXT 100 YEARS, AND SACKED AGAIN BY THE MONGOLS IN 1236.

BY THE 17TH CENTURY, IT HAD BEEN COMPLETELY ABANDONED. 1,001 ABANDONED CHURCHES, BUILT UPON LEGIONS OF THE DEAD.



IT'S A FASCINATING PLACE, WOULDN'T YOU SAY?



I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, HERR SCHULD.

LOOKS LIKE A DUMP TO ME.  
AND COLD AS HELL.



TRUE. AND IT LOOKS LIKE WE'LL BE HERE A WHILE YET.

BUT THE GOOD LORD HELPS THOSE WHO HELP THEMSELVES...



...SO HELP YOURSELVES, GENTLEMEN.  
AND THE DEVIL TAKE THE HINDMOST.





CREEPY.

IT'S SO  
EMPTY.  
LIKE...

LIKE A  
TOMB.



GRIGORIY'S  
INFORMATION SAYS  
THE APOCRYPHA IS  
IN SOMETHING  
CALLED "THE RED  
CHURCH."

RIGHT.  
JUST SOUTH  
OF THAT ONE--  
ST. GREGORY OF  
THE ABUGHAMIR.

BETTER GET  
MOVING--



NO.

?!

IT'S TOO  
QUIET HERE,  
TOO STILL.



STAY HERE  
WHILE I SCOUT  
AHEAD. I'LL BE  
BACK FOR YOU  
SOON.

YOU CAN'T BE  
SERIOUS--

STAY.  
HERE.



A comic book panel showing a person sitting on a ledge in front of a large statue. The person is wearing a winter coat and a beanie, and is holding their hands together in front of their mouth, appearing cold and bored. The statue is a large, classical-style figure. The background is a dark, cloudy sky. There are three speech bubbles: the first says "0600 LOCAL TIME.", the second says "COLD. BORED.", and the third says "BORED AND COLD AND BORED AND...".

0600 LOCAL TIME.

COLD. BORED.

BORED  
AND COLD AND  
BORED AND...

A comic book panel showing a person sitting on a ledge in front of a large statue. The person is wearing a winter coat and a beanie, and is holding their hands together in front of their mouth, appearing cold and bored. The statue is a large, classical-style figure. The background is a dark, cloudy sky. There are three speech bubbles: the first says "0600 LOCAL TIME.", the second says "COLD. BORED.", and the third says "BORED AND COLD AND BORED AND...".

0600 LOCAL TIME.

COLD. BORED.

BORED  
AND COLD AND  
BORED AND...

0645 LOCAL TIME.

SSSSSO FIA

HUH? VEE?

0645 LOCAL TIME.

SSSSSO FIA

HUH? VEE?

SSSSSSSTAY! SOFAAAAA

SSTAY  
HERE

VEE?  
IS THAT  
YOU?

DON'T BELONG  
OUT THERE

CLOSE YOUR  
EYESSSSSSSSS

RESSSSSSSSSSST

HO-KAY.  
CREEPY VOICES  
FROM NOWHERE.  
**NEVER A  
GOOD SIGN.**

SSSTAY!  
SOFFFFIAAAAA

SSSSSSST

--GAAAAH!

DAY  
WITH  
SSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSSS

**STAY  
WITH  
US**





AAAAAA!!

NNNNNEVER  
LEAVE  
USSSSSS

SSSSTAY  
FOREVERRRRRR

BELONG WITH USSSSSS  
INNN THE GOLD  
DIRRRRRRT

LET ME  
GOOO!

LET ME  
GO!

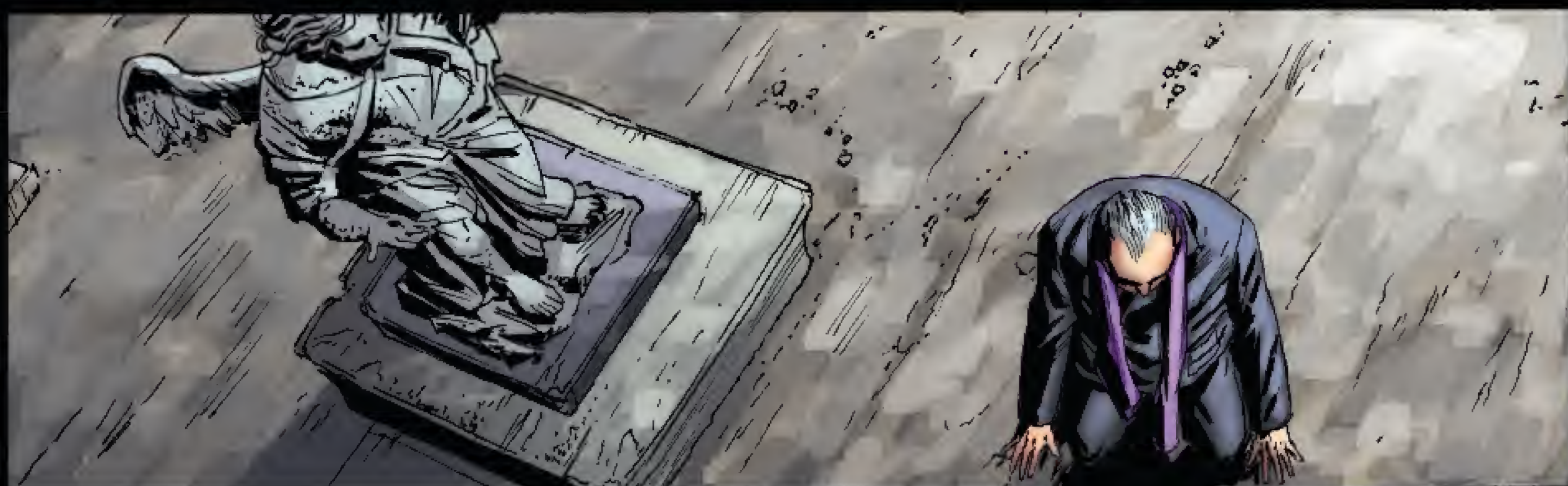




FFFFFFFFOREVERRRRRR



0650 LOCAL TIME



HUFFFF

I WARNED  
THEM.

I TOLD  
THEM NO  
GOOD WOULD  
COME OF  
THIS.





0710 LOCAL TIME

YOU CAN FEEL  
THE HISTORY IN  
THIS PLACE.

AGE HAS SETTLED  
LIKE A LEAD  
WEIGHT ON EVERY  
SPECK OF DUST,  
EVERY CRUMBLING  
BIT OF MASONRY.



IT WEARS THE  
SCREAMS OF THE  
DYING IN IT'S  
VERY BONES.



BUT ASIDE FROM  
THE BURDEN OF IT'S  
TROUBLED PAST...



...THERE'S JUST  
NOTHING HERE.



NO BIRDS. NO  
STRAY ANIMALS.  
EVEN THE WORMS  
HAVE ABANDONED  
THIS PLACE. IT'S  
JUST...



...EMPTY?

LET  
YOUR LIES END  
VAMPIRELLA...  
CURSED BE  
YOUR NAME.

THE VOICE IS  
NEITHER SOFIA,  
NOR SCHULD.

THERE'S NO SCENT  
OF BLOOD OR SKIN,  
JUST DRY DUST AND  
OLD STONE.

YOU ADORN  
YOURSELF IN THE  
GAUDY ORNAMENTS  
OF THE HUMANS.

BUT IT IS A LIE.  
AND THERE WILL BE  
NO LIES BETWEEN  
US, HELL-CHILD.

MY SUDDEN...  
TRANSFORMATION MAY BE  
AN ILLUSION, BUT IT FEELS  
COMPLETELY REAL.

IN MY HEART, I KNOW  
IT'S REAL. IT'S  
PRACTICALLY HUMMING  
WITH THE POWERFUL  
MAGIC BEHIND IT.

YES,  
VAMPIRELLA.  
COME  
CLOSER.

THE TEXTURE OF THE CLOTH,  
THE SOUR, COPPERY TANG OF  
OLD BLOOD DRIED INTO IT'S  
FIBERS. IT'S NO FAKE--IT'S  
SOMETHING I THOUGHT I'D  
SET ASIDE LONG AGO.

AS YOU  
WISH, GHOST.

THIS IS NOT WHAT  
I CHOSE. THIS IS  
NOT WHO I AM.

AND IF THIS  
CHANGE IS TO  
BE FORCED  
UPON ME...



...IT WILL NOT BE  
WITHOUT A HELL  
OF A FIGHT.

GREETINGS,  
O CHILD OF BLOOD  
AND BRIMSTONE.  
WELCOME  
TO MY HOME.

AND JUST  
WHAT ARE YOU  
SUPPOSED  
TO BE?

MERELY  
A HUMBLE SPIRIT,  
PERDITION'S  
CHILD.

BUT MY BRASS  
CLAWS HAVE TORN  
THE FLESH FROM  
THE BONES OF  
THE GUILTY.

MY IRON  
TEETH HAVE RIPPED  
THE HEARTS FROM  
THE UNREPENTANT.

BUT THE  
GUILT **YOU** CARRY,  
THOU DRINKER OF  
**BLOOD**, THOU  
MURDERER OF  
**KIN**...

...SHALL  
BE A MOST  
WORTHY FEAST  
INDEED.

**TO BE CONTINUED**

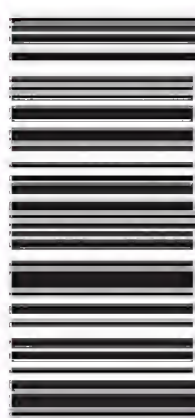


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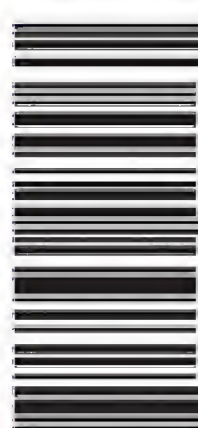
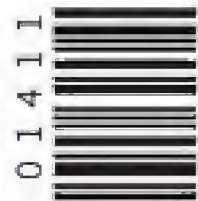


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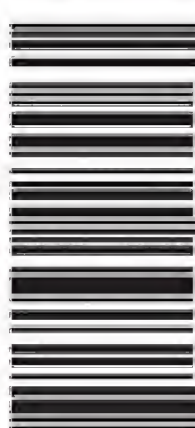
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THIS PLACE IS  
CALLED ANI.

SITUATED RIGHT  
ON THE BORDER  
BETWEEN TURKEY  
AND ARMENIA.

ONCE, A TEEMING  
CITY TO RIVAL  
CONSTANTINOPLE.

NOW ABANDONED,  
FOLLOWING  
CENTURIES OF  
CONQUEST AND  
GENOCIDE.

NOTHING LEFT  
BEHIND BUT 1,001  
RUINED CHURCHES.

WHATEVER  
IT IS YOU WANT  
TO TELL ME, YOU  
SHOULD SPIT  
IT OUT.



AND THE  
UNQUIET DEAD.

RUINS OF THE RED  
CHURCH, CITY OF ANI  
0710 LOCAL TIME

I'VE  
GOT THINGS  
TO DO.

AH. MORE OF  
YOUR KIN MUST  
FALL, YES?


BY FANG AND  
CLAW, NOW. NO  
MORE BLADES,  
NO MORE  
BULLETS.

AL BASTI  
**KNOWS**. YOU  
**REEK** OF THE  
BLOOD OF YOUR  
VICTIMS.

I CAME HERE IN PURSUIT OF A  
SERIAL KILLER, ONE POSSESSING  
FRAGMENTS OF THE **GIACOMINI  
APOCRYPHA**--A LONG-LOST  
MYSTICAL TOME AND A  
GUIDEBOOK FOR TRAFFICKING  
WITH DEMONS.

THE LAST FRAGMENT IS HERE  
SOMEWHERE, IN THIS CITY OF  
GHOSTS, AND IF OUR **FACELESS  
KILLER** FINDS IT, HE COULD VERY  
WELL BECOME HELL'S OWN SAINT  
OF **MURDER**.






AND THAT, I  
SIMPLY WILL  
NOT ALLOW.

YOU STINK  
OF GUILT.

RUN FROM  
IT ALL YOU LIKE,  
LOST CHILD, YOU  
CAN **NEVER**  
ESCAPE IT.

SHE CAN'T HURT ME.  
SHE'S NOTHING BUT  
A GHOST, A SHADE.




A LOST CHILD,  
DENYING WHO AND  
WHAT YOU ARE. BUT  
AL BASTI **KNOWS**.


HERE IN THE  
DUST AND BONES  
OF THIS DEAD PLACE,  
AL BASTI **SEES**.

BUT AL BASTI IS  
POWERFUL, MORE  
THAN MOST. MORE  
THAN A MERE SPIRIT.

WITH A WHISPER,  
MY WEAPONS WERE  
SIMPLY GONE. MY  
APPEARANCE ALTERED  
BACK TO SOMETHING  
I DESPERATELY WANTED  
TO PUT BEHIND ME.



AND THERE'S  
JUST **SOMETHING**  
ABOUT HER.



SEES YOUR  
**FATE**. SEES  
YOUR **FEAR**.

SEES YOUR  
**DOOM**.

LOOK CLOSER,  
VAMPIRELLA.

WHAT DO  
YOU SEE?

**SOMETHING  
FAMILIAR.**





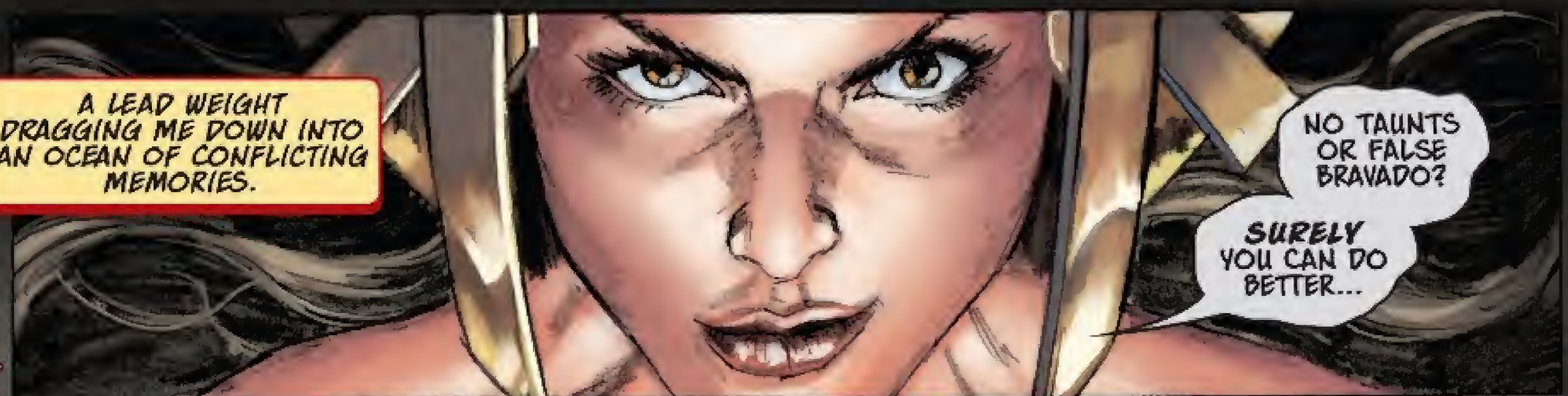
A PRESENCE I'VE  
FELT BEFORE.

WELL?



LIKE THE COSTUME,  
A CURRENT PULLING  
ME, INEXORABLY,  
BACK TO MY PAST.

NOTHING  
TO SAY?



A LEAD WEIGHT  
DRAGGING ME DOWN INTO  
AN OCEAN OF CONFLICTING  
MEMORIES.

NO TAUNTS  
OR FALSE  
BRAVADO?

SURELY  
YOU CAN DO  
BETTER...



...TO GREET  
YOUR BELOVED  
MOTHER.

HER SULPHUR-  
AND-BRIMSTONE  
SCENT PERFUMES  
THE DUSTY AIR.

HER SMILE  
GLEAMING LIKE  
BLOOD ON STEEL,  
LIKE RAZORS ON  
FLESH.



HER VOICE, A  
CHOIR OF THE  
SHRIEKING  
DAMNED.

THE MATRIARCH  
OF HELL'S VILE  
LEGIONS:

LILITH.



ELSEWHERE.

≡KOFF  
KOFF≡

GOD,  
SOFIA...

≡KOFF≡

...WHAT THE  
HELL ARE YOU  
DOING HERE?

COME ON,  
COME ON,  
WHERE IS  
IT?

OKAY.

OKAY,  
LOOK.

I'M GOING  
TO TURN THIS  
FLASHLIGHT  
ON.

AND WHEN  
I DO...

...IT WOULD BE  
AWESOME IF THE  
ARMY OF DEAD GUYS  
THAT PULLED ME  
DOWN HERE AREN'T  
STANDING AROUND  
BEING CREEPY.

KLIK

HMPH.





THANKS FOR NOTHING, GUYS.

win



SSSSSOFFIA

SSSSSOFFIA

YOU COULDDDDD SSSSTAY

BETTER HEEEEEEERE BADDDD THINGSSSS COMING



"STAY HERE WITH THE DEAD THINGS." GOT IT. YOU CAN GIVE IT A REST NOW.

YOU.

IF YOU'RE NOT GONNA KILL ME, HOW ABOUT YOU QUIT ACTING LIKE EXTRAS IN A HAMMER FILM AND JUST POINT THE WAY OUT OF HERE.



THANK YOU.





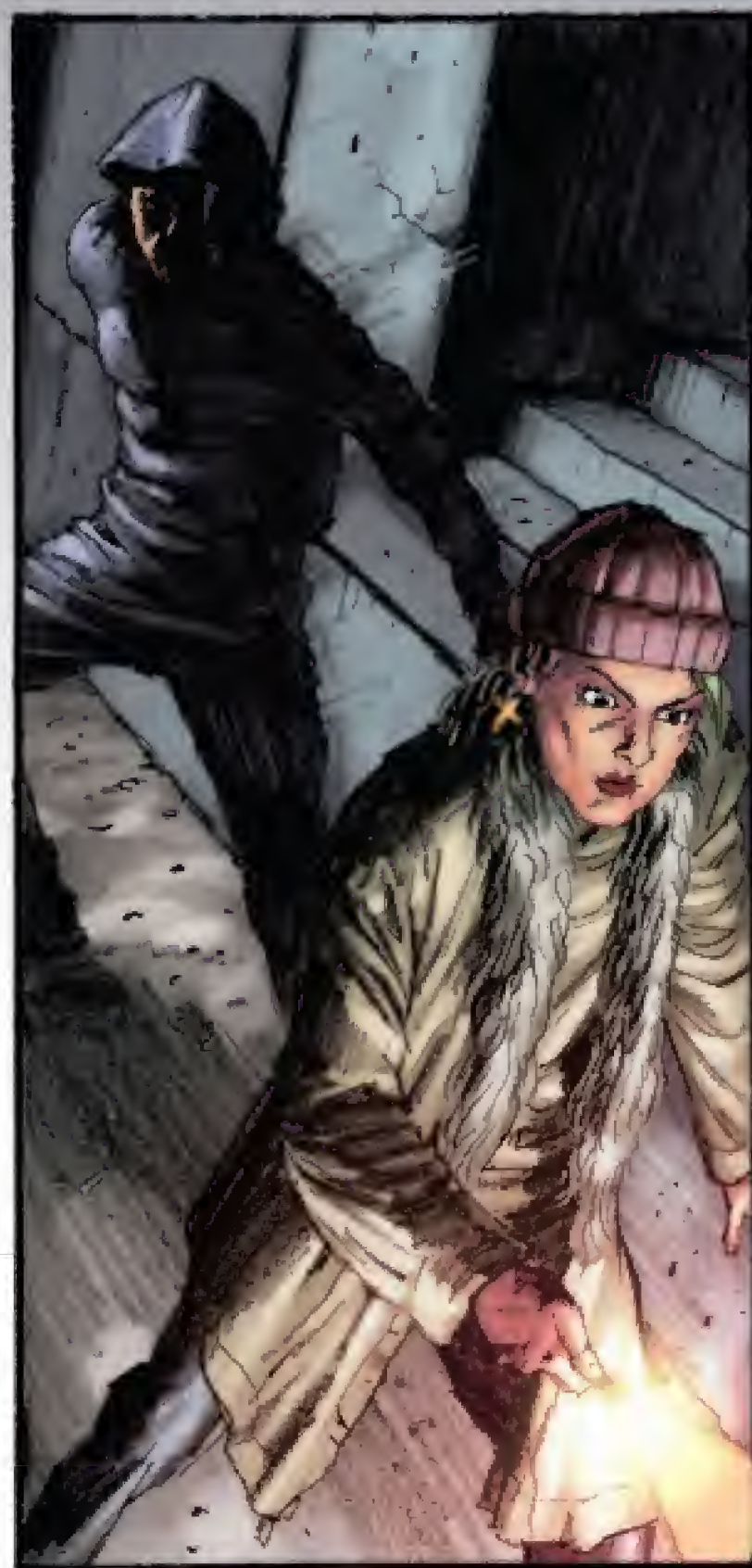
VAMPIRES,  
WEREWOLVES, THE ODD  
DEMON OR TENTACULAR  
HORROR FROM BEYOND  
SPACE AND TIME.



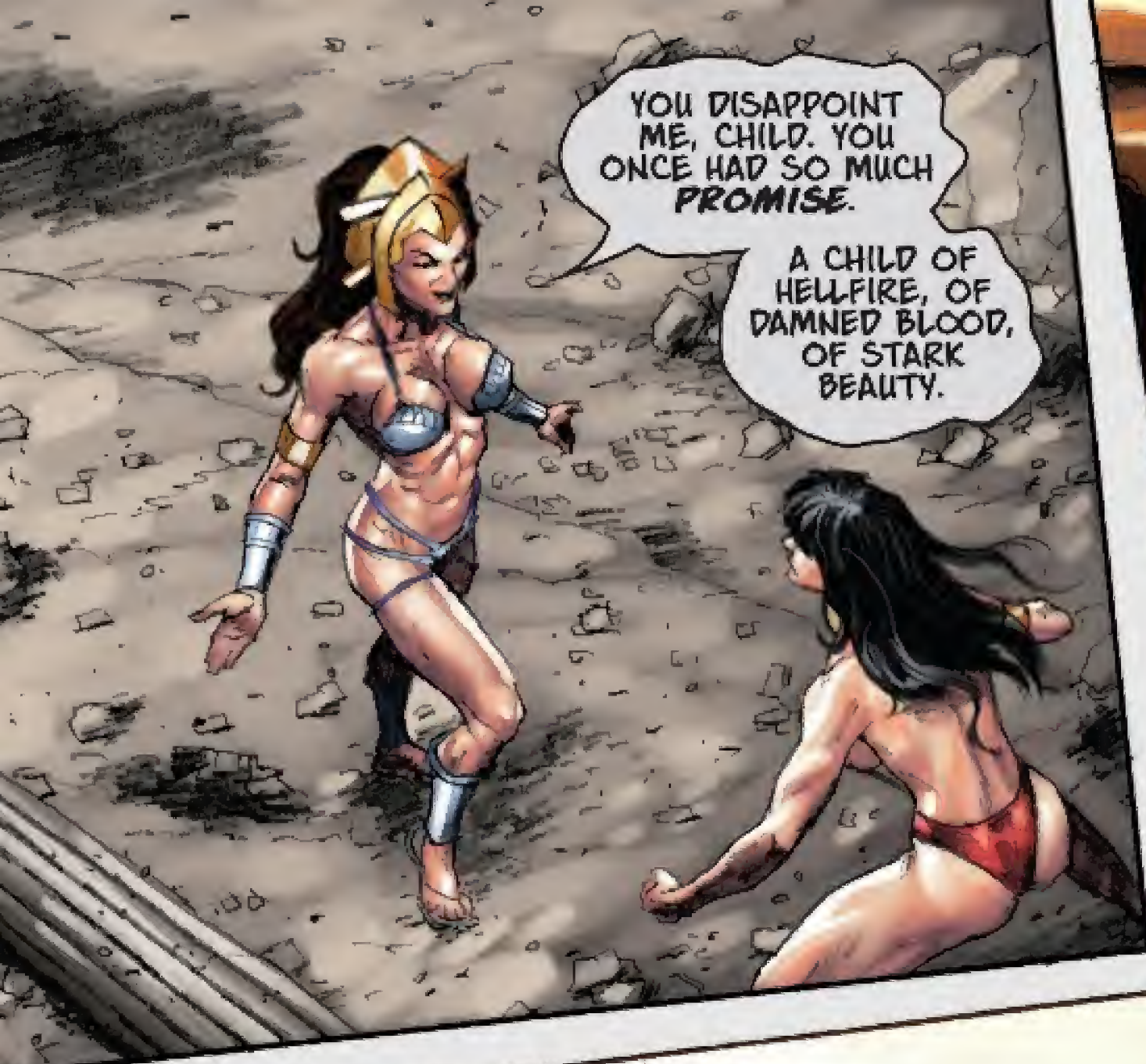
LIKE A  
BUNCH OF  
SKELETONS  
ARE EVEN  
CLOSE TO  
THAT.



EXPECT  
ME TO BE  
AFRAID OF THE  
DARK NEXT.







YOU DISAPPOINT ME, CHILD. YOU ONCE HAD SO MUCH **PROMISE**.  
A CHILD OF HELLFIRE, OF DAMNED BLOOD, OF STARK BEAUTY.



NOW LOOK AT YOU.  
WHERE HAS THAT LOVELY CHILD OF OLD GONE?



YOU WERE TO MEANT BE MY **REDEMPTION**.

MY EXIT FROM THE PIT.

BUT YOU'VE LEFT NOTHING BUT **FAILURE** IN YOUR WAKE.

YOUR HUMAN ALLIES? DEAD OR DAMNED. INSANITY AND DEATH ARE DRAWN TO YOU LIKE A **MAGNET**.



AND THE EVIL I **CREATED** YOU TO STAMP OUT?

IT FLOURISHES NOW LIKE **NEVER** BEFORE.

SHUT UP. SHUT UP. SHUT UP.



SHUT UP.





HER WORDS  
DRIP IN MY EAR.

SOFT AND  
CLOYING.

THAT'S MY  
GIRL.



POISON HONEY,  
DRIPPING ON  
BLOODSTAINED  
VELVET.

I COULD  
NEVER HAVE  
COME THIS  
FAR WITHOUT  
YOU.



AND PART OF ME  
STIRS, UNCOILING LIKE  
A RESTLESS SERPENT,  
ADMITTING THERE'S  
TRUTH TO THE  
WITCH'S WORDS.

AH.

WHERE ARE MY  
ALLIES? WHERE ARE  
THE HUMANS I HAVE  
SACRIFICED SO MUCH  
TO PROTECT?



FOUND  
YOU.



SOFIA STAYED BEHIND  
AT MY URGING, BUT  
WHAT OF SCHULD?

MY LIAISON WITH THE  
VATICAN'S COVERT ACTION  
UNIT, CESTUS DEI.

AT LAST.



WHO HAS SENT ME  
OUT INTO THE TEETH  
OF THE DRAGON  
COUNTLESS TIMES...

...WHERE IS  
HE NOW?





I'M ALONE.  
PARALYZED.

AND YOUR  
PATHETIC ATTEMPT  
TO LOVE A HUMAN?  
LAUGHABLE,  
WERE IT NOT SUCH  
A TRAGIC WASTE.

LORDS OF DARKNESS,  
HAVE I NOT GIVEN  
ENOUGH?



CHNNNNK

SO, LITTLE  
GIRL, IT'S TIME  
TO RING DOWN  
THE CURTAIN.

I WILLINGLY STAND  
AGAINST THE RISING TIDE  
OF EVIL AND MADNESS.  
I HAVE SACRIFICED HOPE,  
AND LOVE, AND ALL  
SENSE OF SELF.



YOUR  
TIME IS  
DONE.

BACK TO  
NOTHINGNESS  
FOR YOU,  
SOULLESS  
THING.



AND MAY THE  
BOTTOMLESS,  
SCREAMING VOID HIDE  
YOUR SHAME AND  
FAILURE FROM MY  
SIGHT.

NOT EVEN SURE IF MY  
MEMORIES--OF A HELLISH  
WORLD THAT MAY NOT EVEN  
BE REAL, AND OF THIS  
CREATURE WHO CLAIMS TO  
BE MY MOTHER--ARE MY  
OWN.



A HOLLOW VESSEL,  
BEARING THE BURDEN  
OF OTHERS' SINS.

JUST STOP  
FIGHTING, AND  
YOU WILL KNOW  
OBLIVION.

NO MORE  
STRUGGLE.  
NO MORE  
FAILURE.

MMMMNNNGH!

A CEASE TO  
POINTLESS BATTLE,  
CHILD. ISN'T  
THAT WHAT YOU  
DESIRE?

YES.

GODS AND  
DEVILS HELP ME,  
I DO WANT THAT.

JUST THE COOL,  
WELCOMING PEACE  
OF THE GRAVE.

?!



BUT IF I'VE  
LEARNED  
ANYTHING...

I HAVE BLINDED  
THE UNBORN OF THE  
UNPUNISHED.

I HAVE CRUSHED  
THE LIFE FROM THE  
OFFSPRING OF THE  
DAMNED, ALL TO FEED  
ON THEIR WELL-  
EARNED GUILT.

...IT'S THAT  
DARKNESS HOLDS  
ONLY LIES.

GGGGGGGHHH!

SHHHLUPPP

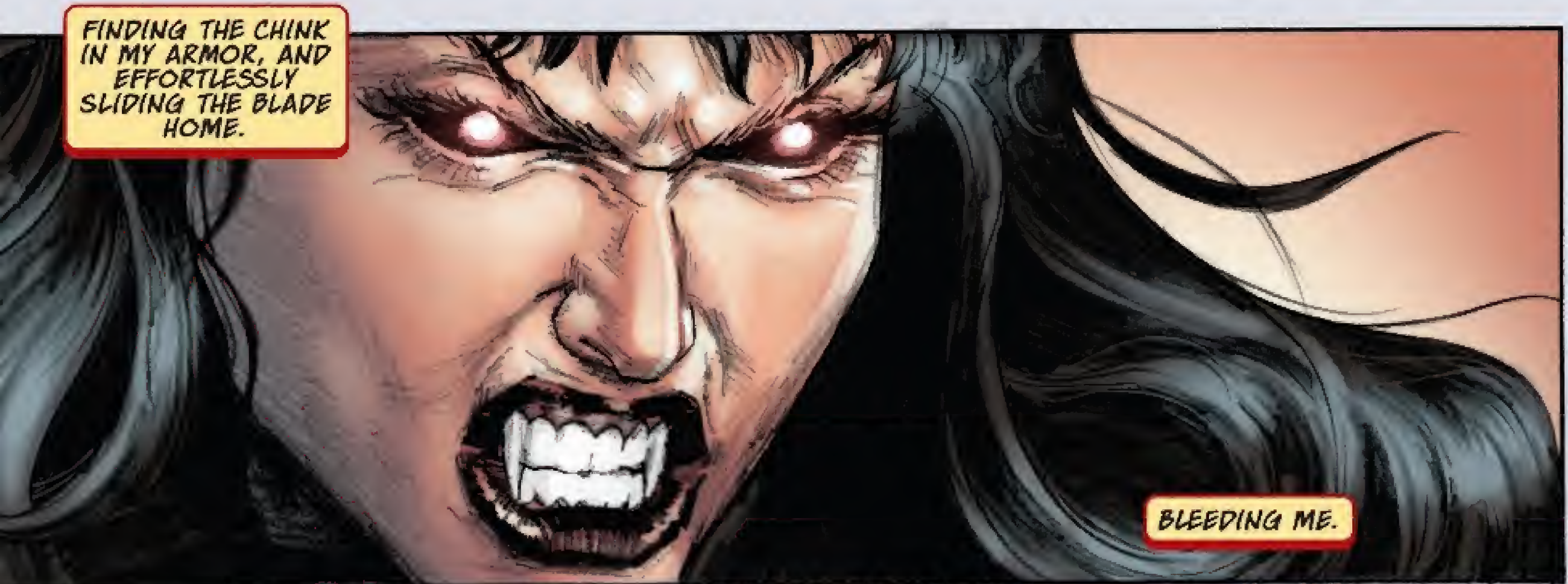
ALL A LIE. ALL  
AN ILLUSION.

A VISION CONJURED  
UP BY AN UNCLEAN  
SPIRIT. PRYING MY  
SECRET FEARS  
FROM THE DEPTHS  
OF MY SOUL.

BUT YOU,  
O CHILD OF  
HELL...

YOU ARE  
THE FINEST DELICACY  
I HAVE ENCOUNTERED  
THROUGH THE LONG  
CENTURIES.





FINDING THE CHINK  
IN MY ARMOR, AND  
EFFORTLESSLY  
SLIDING THE BLADE  
HOME.

BLEEDING ME.

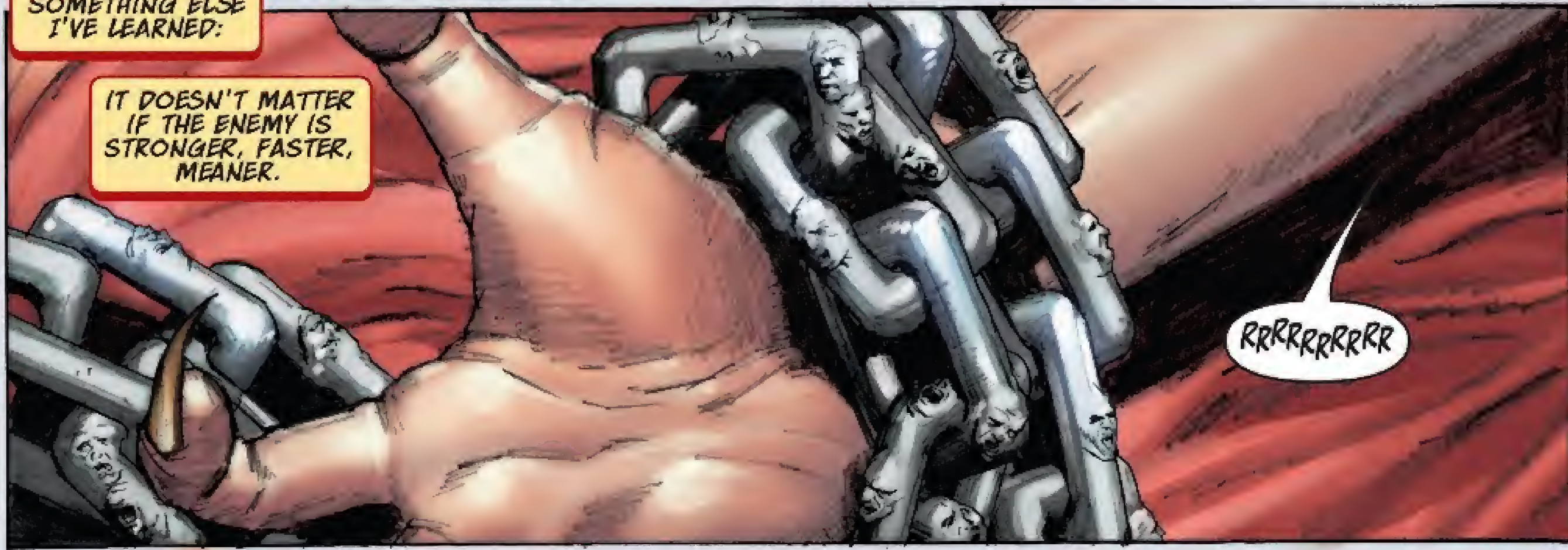


WEAKENING  
ME.

RRRRRRRRRR

THERE'S  
SOMETHING ELSE  
I'VE LEARNED:

IT DOESN'T MATTER  
IF THE ENEMY IS  
STRONGER, FASTER,  
MEANER.



RRRRRRRRRR



THE ONE WHO WINS  
THE BATTLE...

KREEEK

RRRRRRRRRR



...IS THE ONE  
WHO REFUSES  
TO QUIT.

**No!**







MORE SKELETONS.  
IS IT MY PERFUME?

SSSSSSSOFIAAAA  
SSSS

STAYYY

PLEEEEEASE  
STAY WITH  
USSSSSSSSSS



IT'S... IT'S SOMETHING ABOUT ME, ISN'T IT?  
YOU'RE NOT DOING THE WHOLE FRIENDLY GHOST THING FOR EVERYBODY, RIGHT?

SSSSSSSSSOMETHING  
SSSSOMETHING ABOUT SOFIAAAA



WHAT?  
WHAT IS IT?

SSSSSENSED YOU BEEEEFORE



BEFORE?  
BEFORE WHEN?

TTTTTTTOUCHED OTHERWORLD.  
YAG-ATH VERMELLUS  
SSSS...\*

...FFFFFELT YOU AGAIN,  
NOT LONG AGO. CLOSSERRRR. THE  
WOLFFF AT THE DOOOORR.\*\*

DOOOORR WAS LEFT OPEN,  
SOFFFIAAAA...

\*VAMPIRELLA: CROWN OF WORMS.  
\*\*VAMPIRELLA #11.

















BA-  
WHOOOOM



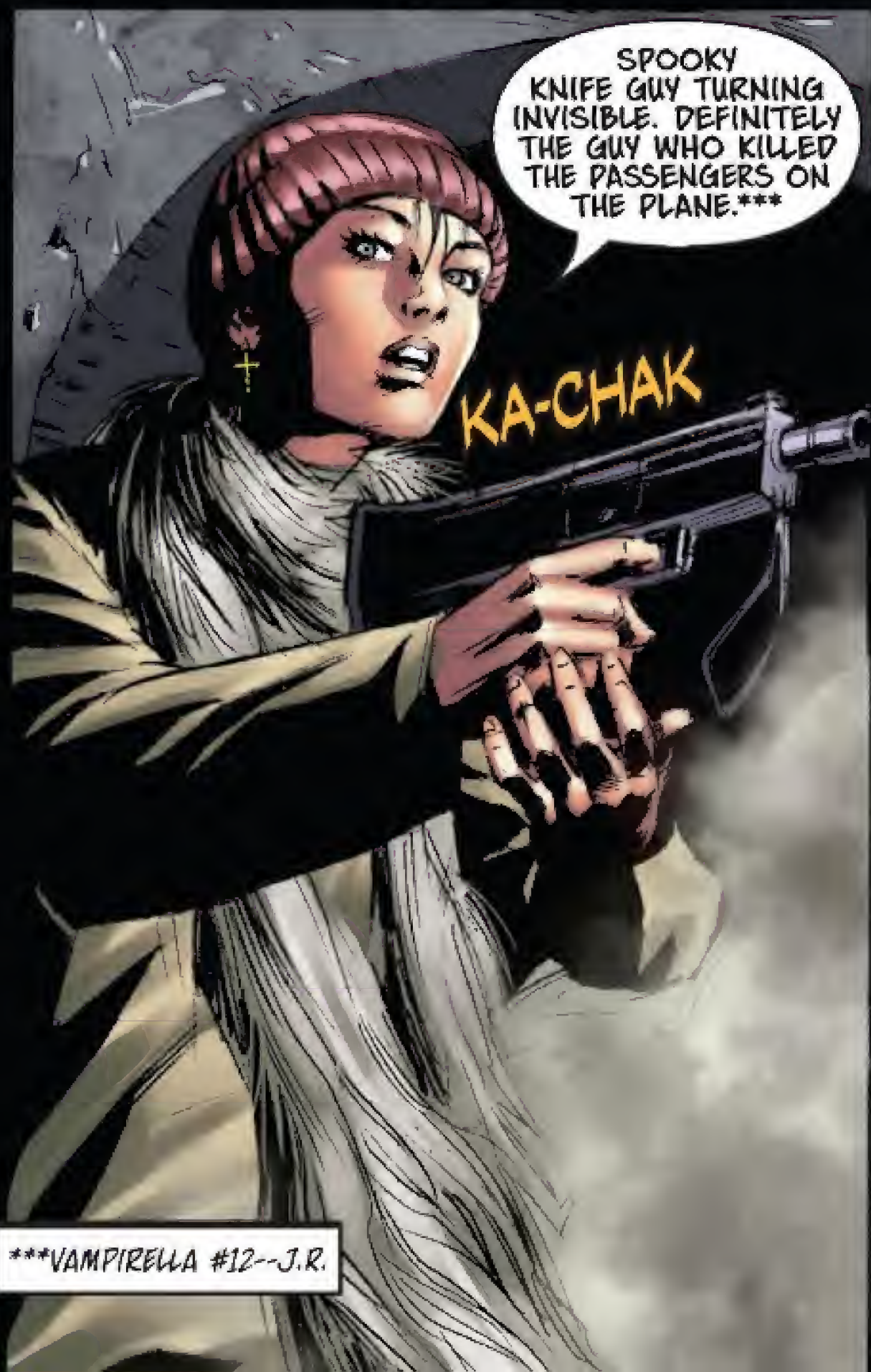
RRRRRR  
RUMBLE



PLNK

PLNK

PLNK



SPOOKY  
KNIFE GUY TURNING  
INVISIBLE. DEFINITELY  
THE GUY WHO KILLED  
THE PASSENGERS ON  
THE PLANE.\*\*\*

KA-CHAK

\*\*\*VAMPIRELLA #12--J.R.



SEE YOU  
SOON, YOU  
MOTHERF--





--WHOA.

WELL, HELLO  
THERE.

INVISO-GUY'S  
LOOKING FOR  
SOMETHING.

AND HERE'S  
A LOCKED  
BOX.

WHAT TO  
DO, WHAT  
TO DO?



KRAK

SPANG



YOU DON'T  
LOOK LIKE  
MUCH...



...BUT I'M  
PRETTY SURE  
VEE WILL BE  
HAPPY TO SEE  
YOU...





"...ONCE WE GET THE BAND BACK TOGETHER."

ARE YOU WELL, MY DEAR?

YOU SEEMED TO BE HAVING... DIFFICULTY.

I'M FINE. DESPITE ALL YOUR *HELP*, SCHULD.



YES, WELL, FIGHTING THE MONSTERS IS MORE *YOUR* AREA OF EXPERTISE.

I'M IN THE "MORAL SUPPORT" DEPARTMENT.

WE SHOULD DOUBLE BACK AND FIND SOFIA. YOU SAW HER ON YOUR WAY IN?

INDEED. THIS WAY.



WHEN I LEFT HER, SHE WAS PERFECTLY FINE.



I EXPECT WE'LL FIND HER WITHOUT GREAT DIFFICULTY.



JUST HAVE FAITH, DEAR GIRL.

HAVE FAITH.

TO BE  
CONTINUED

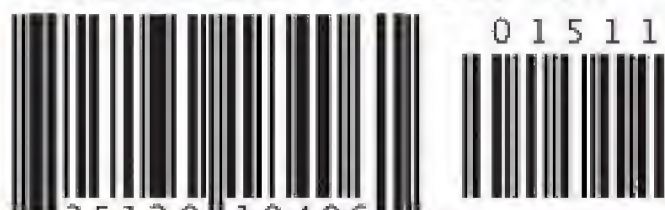


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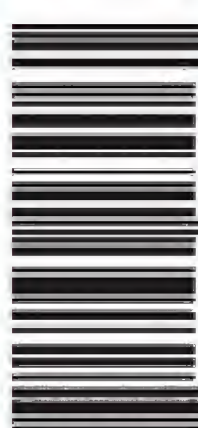
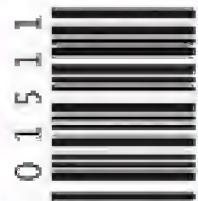


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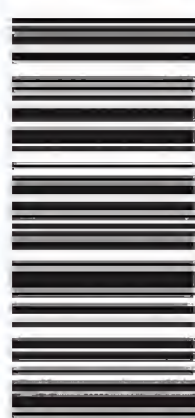
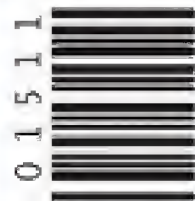


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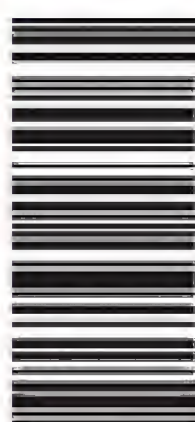
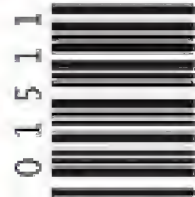


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CRYPTS BENEATH ANI  
ARMENIA/TURKEY BORDER  
0730 LOCAL TIME.


"THIS PLACE  
IS A GHOST."




"CENTURIES OF  
GENOCIDE AND ATROCITY  
HAVE LEFT BEHIND LITTLE  
MORE THAN STILL DUST  
AND OLD BONE."



"I IMAGINE HE  
FEELS RIGHT AT  
HOME HERE."



"ALONE IN THE  
DARK WITH THE  
DEAD THINGS..."



"...THE GIBBERING  
VOICES IN HIS HEAD  
THAT SPUR HIM ON..."



"...AND HIS  
KNIFE."



"A MONSTER,  
DRUNK ON BLOOD  
AND DAMNATION."

YOU MIGHT  
CONSIDER  
A COAT,  
MY DEAR.

WE'RE NOT  
EXACTLY IN THE  
TROPICS.

IT APPEARS  
TO HAVE BEEN...  
MISPLACED, HERR  
SCHULD.

"SHE DOES HER BEST  
TO HIDE IT, BUT SHE'S  
SEETHING WITH  
ANGER."

"I'VE BEEN A PRIEST  
FOR MOST OF MY  
ADULT LIFE, BUT  
I CAN'T HELP IT."

"HER SKIN IS PALE AS  
MOONLIGHT. HER EYES  
BLAZING WITH EMERALD  
FIRE. AND HER LIPS..."

"...WELL. BEST  
NOT TO MENTION  
WHAT THEY MAKE  
ME THINK OF."

AHEM.  
YOUR  
WEAPONS,  
YOUR  
CLOTHES...

GONE.  
THAT SPIRIT,  
AL BASTI,  
MADE THEM  
VANISH.\*

LEFT ME  
LIKE THIS.

WAIT HERE.

THE DEVIL  
ALONE KNOWS WHAT  
ELSE IS LURKING IN  
THESE RUINS...

\*SEE LAST ISSUE.--J.R.



"SHE'S  
BEAUTIFUL."

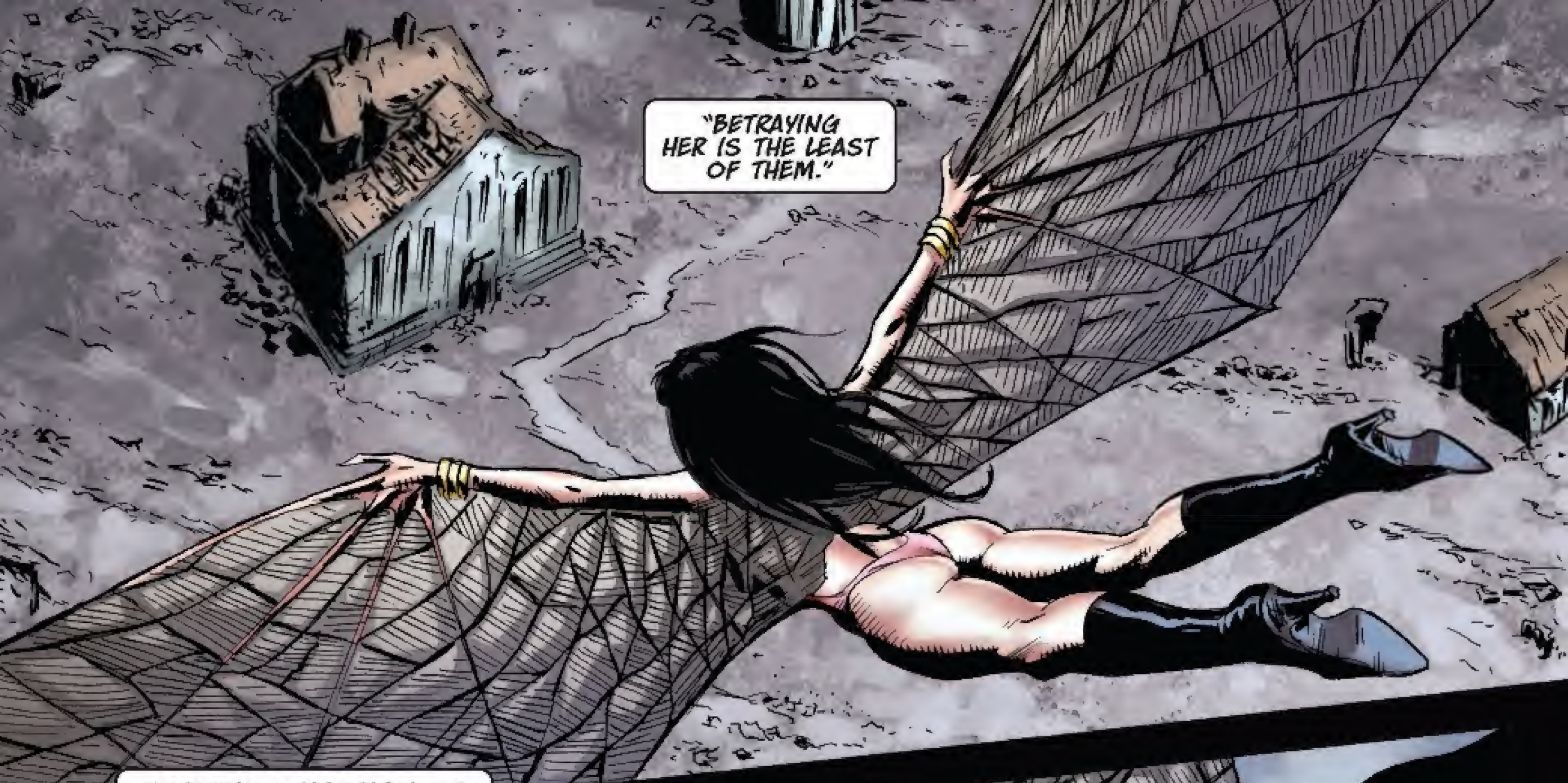
I'M  
GOING TO FIND  
SOFIA.

"I HAVE MANY  
REGRETS, AND A  
HOST OF SINS  
TO ATONE FOR."

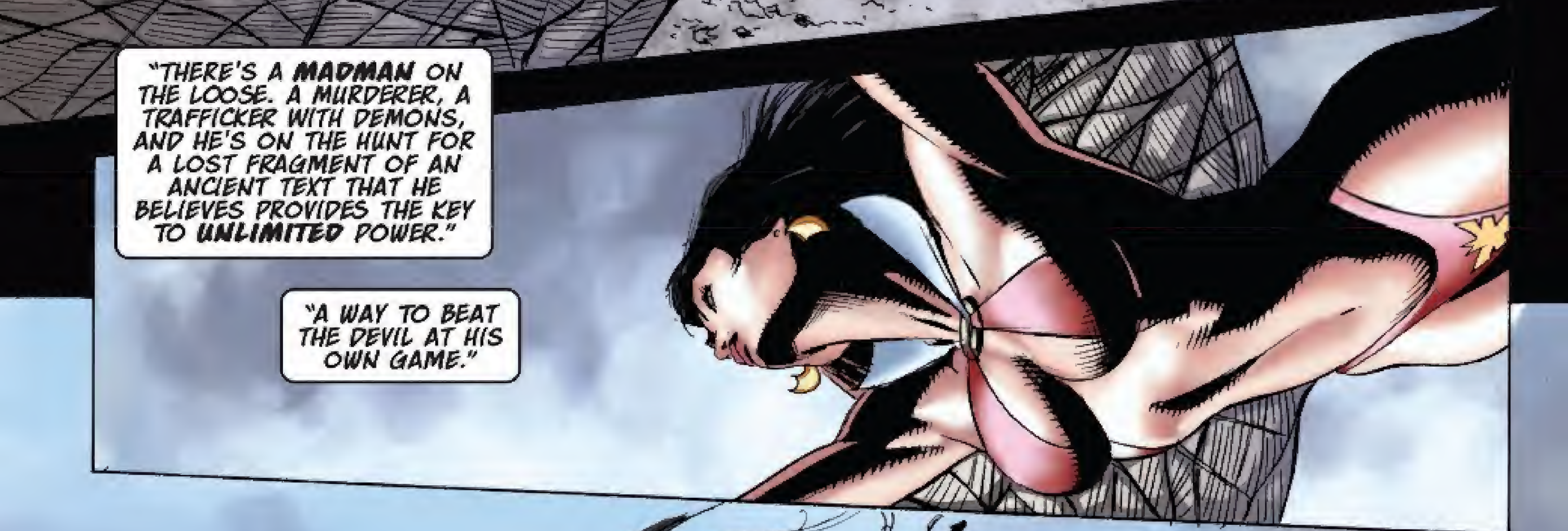
"AND SOME STAINS  
UPON MY SOUL  
THAT I WILL NEVER,  
EVER BE ABLE TO  
WIPE CLEAN."

YES. YOU  
WILL. VERY  
SOON.



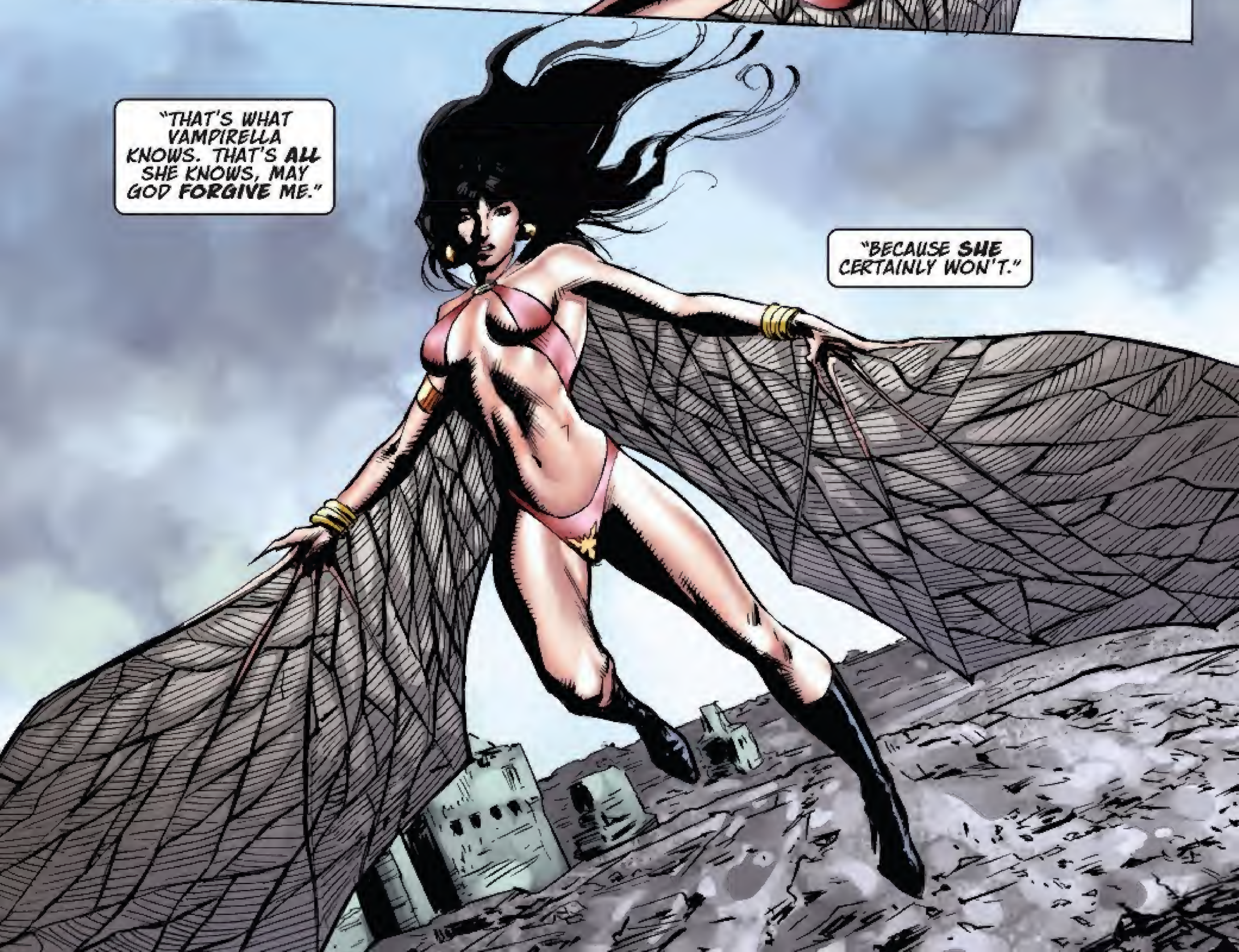
Vampirella is shown from a high angle, flying over a city. She has long black hair and is wearing a pink bikini top with a yellow star on the side, black thigh-high boots, and large black wings. She is holding the edges of her wings with both hands.

"BETRAYING  
HER IS THE LEAST  
OF THEM."

A close-up of Vampirella's face and upper body. She is looking down with a serious expression. Her wings are visible behind her.

"THERE'S A **MADMAN** ON  
THE LOOSE. A MURDERER, A  
TRAFFICKER WITH DEMONS,  
AND HE'S ON THE HUNT FOR  
A LOST FRAGMENT OF AN  
ANCIENT TEXT THAT HE  
BELIEVES PROVIDES THE KEY  
TO **UNLIMITED POWER.**"

"A WAY TO BEAT  
THE DEVIL AT HIS  
OWN GAME."

Vampirella is shown from a low angle, flying towards the viewer. She is holding the edges of her wings, and her long black hair is blowing in the wind. The city is visible in the background.

"THAT'S WHAT  
VAMPIRELLA  
KNOWS. THAT'S **ALL**  
SHE KNOWS, MAY  
GOD FORGIVE ME."

"BECAUSE **SHE**  
CERTAINLY WON'T."





"I NEVER TOLD HER THE TRUTH."

"I WISH I HAD, BUT THERE'S SIMPLY TOO MUCH AT STAKE FOR THAT."

YOU GUYS WOULDN'T SHUT UP WHEN YOU DRAGGED ME DOWN HERE.

"WOOOOO! WE'RE A BUNCH OF SCARRRRY SPIRITS."



"NEVER TOLD HER THE MURDERER SHE SEEKS IS MORE THAN TWO HUNDRED YEARS OLD."

BUT WHEN I NEED TO FIND A WAY OUT OF HERE, YOU GUYS CLAM UP?

GHOSTS SUCK.



"HIS LIFE EXTENDED BY THE ENCHANTMENTS LOCKED WITHIN THE VAIRO APOCRYPHA."

"HIS HEART DEVOTED ONLY TO RECOVERING THE PIECES OF THAT UNHOLY TEXT, LONG THOUGHT DESTROYED BY THE CHURCH."

"A BISHOP IN A SECRET CHURCH DEVOTED SOLELY TO MURDER AND EVIL."

"A BLOOD-HUNGRY WOLF, LOOSE AMONG THE SHEEP."

NO TIME. YOU'RE ALMOST THERE. IF YOU MOVE QUICKLY.



ALMOST WHERE?

WHERE YOU'RE MEANT TO BE.

I CAN'T SAY I LIKE THE SOUND OF--



TOO LATE.





"BECAUSE  
TO TELL HER  
WOULD BE TO  
ADMIT MY PART  
IN THE TRAGEDY  
THAT IS  
UNFOLDING."

NNNNNGH!

WHAKK



"A PART I REGRET,  
TO BE SURE. A  
NECESSARY EVIL."

SNEAKY  
BASTARD--

"I MUST BE  
LIKE A SURGEON,  
TREATING A  
TERRIBLE DISEASE."



HAVE TO  
DO BETTER  
THAN

HHNNNGH!

KRRRAK

THAT,  
YOU SON  
OF--



WHUDD



"CERTAINLY, THERE'S A  
MOMENT OF REMORSE, A  
PANG AT THE NECESSITY  
OF AMPUTATING THE  
RUINED LIMB."

--NO PLEASE  
WAIT--

"AND THEN,  
THERE IS ONLY  
THE KNIFE AND  
THE SAW AND  
THE BITTER  
TRUTH:"

AAAAAHHH!



"THIS PAIN IS  
NECESSARY. THIS  
SACRIFICE--TERRIFYING  
AND TRAGIC THOUGH IT  
IS--IS REQUIRED OR  
THE BODY WITHERS  
AND DIES."

AAAAAAAAAA!

SOFIA?

SOFIA!

"SO I REMIND MYSELF  
OF MY DUTY. OF THE  
OATH I SWORE."

"I REMIND  
MYSELF..."

SKSSSSSSH



"THERE ARE  
NO HEROES."

SHRRRRIPPP

"THAT  
VAMPIRELLA IS  
A CREATURE OF  
THE PIT."

"NO MATTER  
HOW LOVELY  
SHE IS, YOU  
CAN'T DENY IT."


"THE COLD FEELING  
SHIVERING THROUGH  
YOUR GUT."

"THE TINGLING THRILL  
OF ATAVISTIC TERROR,  
LIKE THE FOOTFALLS OF  
THE FLY UPON THE COLD,  
UNSEEING EYE OF A  
CORPSE."


"SHE IS A BEAST.  
HER NOBILITY IS  
MERE SIMULATION,  
THE ROTE ACTIONS OF  
A SOULLESS THING.  
NOTHING MORE."

"I REMIND  
MYSELF."






"I KEEP REMINDING MYSELF."




"AND I STRUGGLE TO REMEMBER THAT WHAT I DO IS AN ACT OF FAITH AND DEVOTION."



"WHAT IS TO COME IS GOD'S WILL."


COME ON, SOFIA. I KNOW YOU'RE NEAR.



"AND I AM BUT HIS INSTRUMENT."

SNFF  
SNFF

AIR CURRENTS FROM BENEATH THE ALTAR...



"AND BY USING VAMPIRELLA AS A TOOL TO SERVE THESE ENDS, IS SHE NOT THEN A PART OF GOD'S PLAN?"

"PERHAPS BY PLACING HER IN SERVICE TO THE DIVINE, SHE CAN BE REDEEMED, AND KNOW PEACE."

LET'S SEE WHAT YOU'RE HIDING.

RRRUMMMBLE



"ALL A LIE, OF  
COURSE. I STRUGGLE  
WITH MY FAITH. I  
ALWAYS HAVE."

"AT THE LAST, I CAN'T  
FIND IT IN ME TO  
PROLONG THE LIE."

"I HAVE GAZED INTO  
THE ABYSS SO MANY  
TIMES, AND ONLY  
SEEN THE DEVIL  
LOOKING BACK. I'VE  
NOT YET SEEN THE  
GRACE OF GOD."



"FOR EVERY MOMENT  
OF COMPASSION AND  
KINDNESS I'VE  
WITNESSED, FOR EVERY  
SELFLESS GESTURE..."



"...I'VE SEEN A HUNDRED  
ACTS OF SAVAGE  
CRUELTY, UNTIL MY  
BELIEF IS A TATTERED,  
BROKEN THING."

So why keep  
doing it, Herr  
Schuld?

Hm?

I know.

Admit it.

NNNGGGAH!

Say it.

Fine.

Then I'll  
say it.

NO.

You like it.

SHUT UP  
SHUT UP.

You like the murder.  
The screaming.  
The Blood. And Oh,  
I miss the blood.

Just like old times,  
oh Schuld?

Ha ha ha ha!  
Haaaaa!





So stop  
fighting it.

You want it.

I want it.

NNNNN.

Just relax  
and we can be  
on our way.  
Together.

NO.  
YOU'LL  
GET YOUR  
CHANCE SOON  
ENOUGH.

BUT ONLY  
WHEN EVERYTHING  
HAS BEEN MADE  
READY. I'VE FOUND  
YOU THE PERFECT  
HOME.

Spoilsport.



But have it your  
way, Man of God.  
I've been patient  
a long time.

I can wait a  
little longer.



"I WISH I'D  
BEEN A BETTER  
CHESS PLAYER."

"TOO MANY  
VARIABLES, TOO  
MANY POSSIBILITIES."

"I NEVER COULD QUITE  
WRAP MY HEAD  
AROUND THE GAME."

AAAAAH!

SSSHRIIP

NO NO NO  
NNNNNNNN  
NAAAAA!

"MY FATHER WAS A  
MASTER OF THE GAME.  
HE LOVED THE DANCE OF  
IT ALL, LIKE THERE WAS  
MUSIC ONLY HE COULD  
HEAR."

"WHEN ALL THE PIECES  
WERE IN MOTION, HE  
SAID, THE GAME TAKES  
ON A LIFE OF ITS OWN."

I SAW YOU DANCE  
THROUGH A HAIL  
OF BULLETS. SO  
THERE'S NO WAY  
I BLINDSIDED  
YOU.

I'M NOT AN  
IDIOT. YOU'RE  
JUST TOYING  
WITH ME.

WELL,  
I'VE GOT A TOY  
OF MY OWN,  
UGLY...

SO IF  
YOU WANT THE  
APOCRYPHA, WE'RE  
GONNA PLAY BY  
SOME NEW  
RULES.

CHING





"THAT TERRIFIED  
ME, AS A CHILD."

"INVESTING ONE'S  
INTELLECT IN PLASTIC  
PIECES AND A WOODEN  
BOARD SOMEHOW  
GRANTED IT A KIND  
OF LIFE."



"IT SEEMED...  
UNHOLY."

"BUT HE WAS  
RIGHT. HE WAS  
ALWAYS RIGHT."

"AND THAT WAS THE  
LEAST TERRIFYING  
TRUTH HE IMPARTED  
BEFORE HE DIED."



PLEASE.  
NOT DOWN  
HERE. NOT LIKE  
THIS. I DON'T  
WANT TO DIE  
IN THE DARK.



"SO THE PIECES  
CONTINUE TO  
DANCE..."



"...THEIR MOVES  
FORETOLD BEFORE I  
EVEN PLACED THEM  
ON THE BOARD."

GET  
AWAY FROM  
HER.

OH GOD, VEE,  
IT HURTS...

"I WONDER IF  
FATHER WOULD BE  
PROUD OR SAD?"

"HE ALWAYS SAID I  
HAD NO RESPECT FOR  
OUR TRADITIONS."

"THAT I WAS NOT WORTHY  
OF THE FAMILY NAME."

"HE CURSED  
ME FOR A FOOL  
WHEN I JOINED  
THE PRIESTHOOD."

THERE'S A  
GREAT DEAL OF  
BLOOD ON YOUR  
HANDS, MURDERER.  
A PLANELOAD OF  
INNOCENTS. THE  
BLOOD OF MY  
FRIEND.

VEE!  
WE'VE GOT TO  
GET OUT OF  
HERE--

VEE?

BAD LUCK  
FOR YOU. I'VE  
GOT A FONDNESS  
FOR BLOOD.

"AH, FATHER..."





"...IF YOU COULD  
SEE JUST HOW MUCH  
I HAVE LIVED UP TO  
THE FAMILY NAME."

**ENOUGH.**

YOUR  
POWERS WERE  
**BORROWED**  
OR **STOLEN.**



**WAP**

BARGAINED  
FOR WITH  
THE FILTH  
OF HELL.

PAID  
FOR WITH BITS  
OF YOUR SOUL  
AND FLESH.

BUT IN  
THE END...

...YOU'RE JUST  
A **HUMAN.**





"BUT FATHER IS LONG PAST SEEING, AND I DOUBT YOU'LL EVER SEE THIS, EITHER, VAMPIRELLA."



NNNF

"BECAUSE THE END GAME IS STARTING."



--YOU?



ME.

YOU'VE DONE WELL, CHILD.

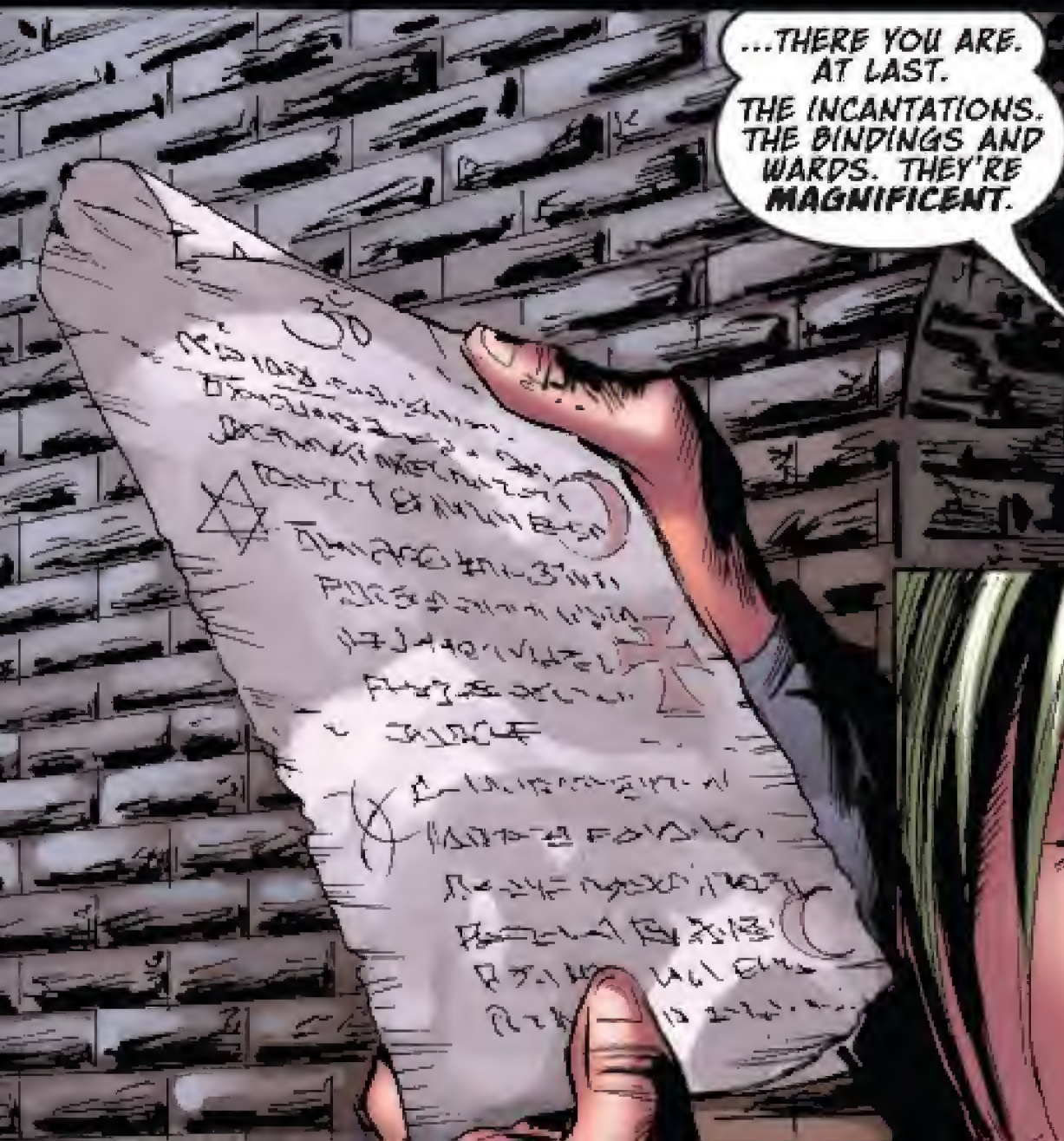
PLAYED YOUR PART BEAUTIFULLY.



THE LORD WORKS IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS, SOFIA.

WHERE IS IT?

MY PART? WHAT, FALL IN A DEEP HOLE, GET JABBERED AT BY GHOSTS AND LET A SERIAL KILLER STAB ME A LOT?



...THERE YOU ARE. AT LAST. THE INCANTATIONS. THE BINDINGS AND WARDS. THEY'RE MAGNIFICENT.



UH, SCHULD, I THINK WE HAVE A BIG PROBLEM...





"YOU TRY TO FIGHT IT, BUT IT'S BEEN FAR TOO LONG SINCE YOU'VE...INDULGED YOURSELF, HASN'T IT, VAMPIRELLA?"



YEE!  
NO!  
WE'VE GOT TO STOP HER, SCHULD. I'VE NEVER SEEN HER LIKE THIS.

"YOU'VE TRIED TO BATTLE YOUR HUNGER, TO SUPPRESS WHAT YOU TRULY ARE."

"BUT YOUR CONFRONTATION WITH AL BASTI LEFT YOU ANGRY AND OFF BALANCE."



I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE.

"SO IT SEEMS WE'RE NOT SO DIFFERENT, AFTER ALL."



MY NAME ISN'T REALLY SCHULD.

"SCHULD" IS GERMAN FOR "GUILT." DID YOU KNOW THAT?

WHAT THE F--





"BOTH OF US BORN FROM HELL'S NOT OF OUR MAKING."

HUSH.

WHAKK

--GAAAH!



"WILLING TO COMMIT HORRIBLE ACTS FOR A GREATER GOOD."

I'M TRULY SORRY, CHILD.

BUT YOU WERE TOO PERFECT TO PASS UP. THE EXORCISM IN GERMANY\* WAS A FIELD TEST, AND YOU PASSED WITH FLYING COLORS.

\*YOU READ VAMPIRELLA #11, RIGHT? --J.R.



SSSHLLLRRRRP  
CHRIST ALMIGHTY.



"ALL MONSTERS TOGETHER."



FORGIVE ME, SOFIA.



Oh, she's perfect. Just perfect. A strong mind, but with plenty of trapdoors.

Not her first time playing host, is it?

SO PLEASED YOU APPROVE.

Sarcasm ill becomes you. So, just get on with it.

I have a new life to begin...

...and I'm just dying to thank you in person.

TO BE  
CONTINUED



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IT'S ALL GONE  
WRONG.

FIRST, THERE WAS  
THE RICH, COPPERY  
FLOOD AS MY FANGS  
PIERCED THE OH SO  
FRAGILE ARTERY.

THEN THE DIZZYING  
RUSH OF VELVETED  
SENSATION, LIKE  
A DRUG.

IT'S BEEN SO LONG,  
I'VE FORGOTTEN  
JUST HOW **GOOD**  
THIS CAN FEEL.

AND THEN,  
THE VISIONS.

SHARP-EDGED, LIKE  
BROKEN GLASS  
RAKED ACROSS MY  
MIND.

INSISTENT AND  
POWERFUL, BATTERING  
ASIDE ANY RESISTANCE  
AND PARALYZING ME.

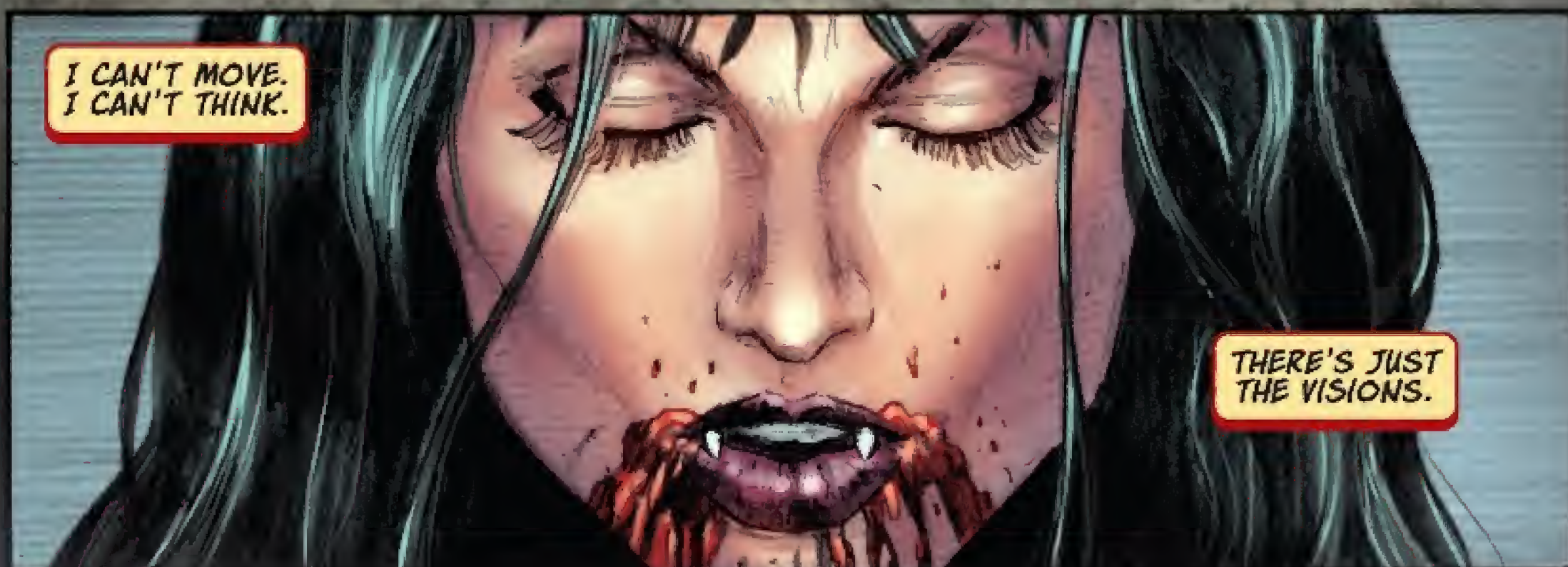
THE GLINT OF  
A NEEDLE, THE TIP  
HEATED UNTIL IT  
GLOWS. THE HISS AS  
IT MEETS FLESH.

THE SCREAMS OF THE DYING,  
SLOWLY COMBINING, OVER  
YEARS OF MURDER, INTO A  
SINGLE, ANGUISHED HOWL.

THE UNSPEAKABLE  
POWER, WIELDED BY  
A MONSTER WHO  
LONG AGO FORGOT  
HOW TO BE HUMAN.

I CAN'T MOVE.  
I CAN'T THINK.

THERE'S JUST  
THE VISIONS.





CRYPTS BENEATH ANI  
ARMENIA/TURKEY BORDER  
0740 LOCAL TIME

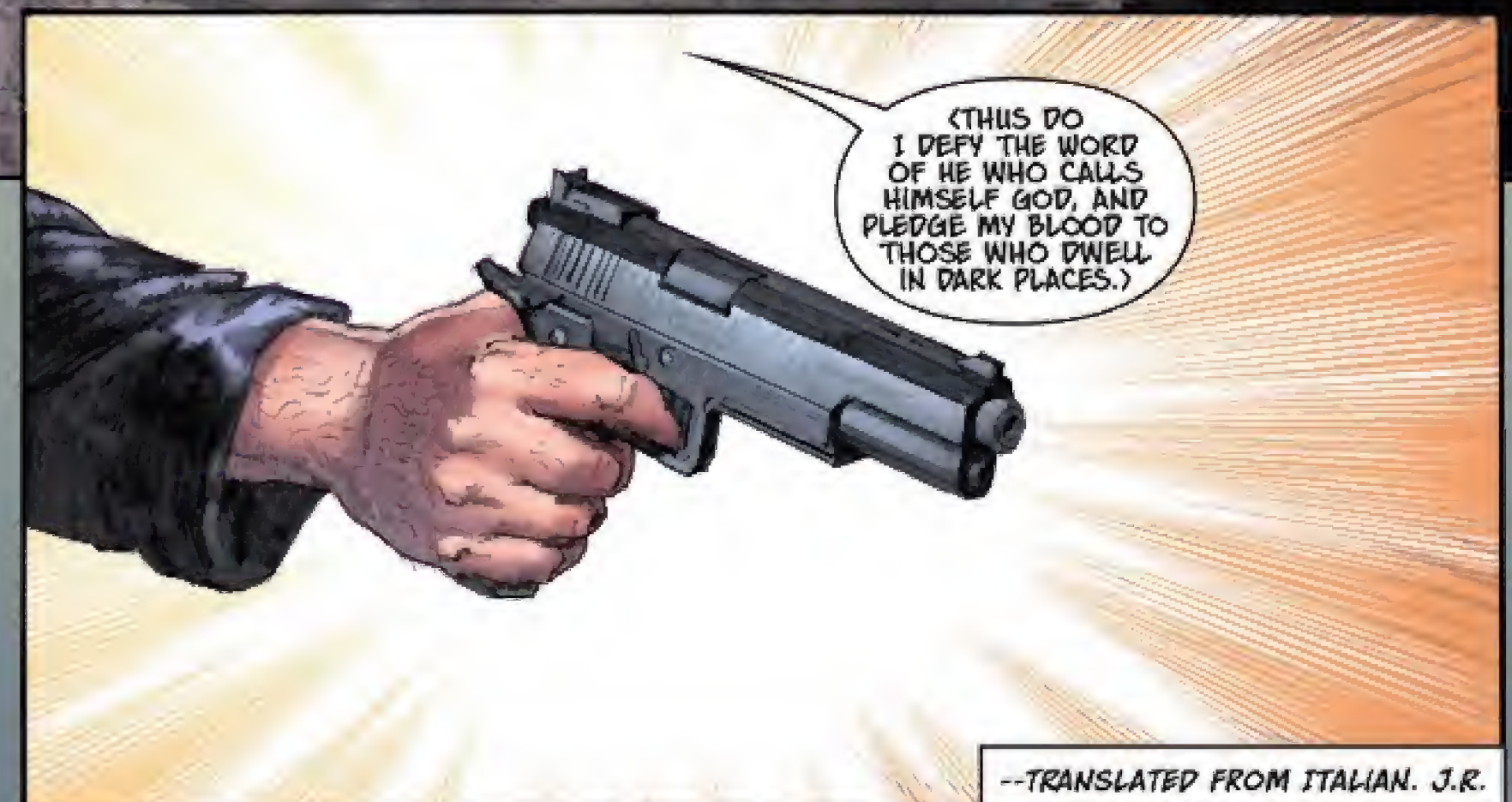
AND THE KNOWLEDGE  
THAT THE FONDEST  
MEMORIES OF THE  
MAN I JUST KILLED  
MIGHT ACTUALLY BE  
MURDERING ME.

NNNNNGGGH



(--THUS DO  
I BESECH THEE,  
THOU SERVANTS OF  
FIRE, OF FOG, OF  
NIGHT WINDS.)

(WITH THESE  
OFFERINGS OF  
FLESH, OF BLOOD,  
AND OF WORDS OF  
POWER, DO I BID  
THEE COME AND  
PARLAY.)



(THUS DO  
I DEFY THE WORD  
OF HE WHO CALLS  
HIMSELF GOD, AND  
PLEDGE MY BLOOD TO  
THOSE WHO DWELL  
IN DARK PLACES.)

--TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN. J.R.



GOD  
FORGIVE  
ME.

(THUS DO  
I PROVIDE THEE  
ENTRANCE TO THIS  
WORLD, AND INVITE  
THEE TO STEP  
THROUGH THAT  
DOOR.)

(BLOOD FOR  
BLOOD. FLESH  
FOR FLESH.)

(A VESSEL  
FOR THEE,  
SCULPTED FROM  
HUMAN CLAY.)

(I INVOKE THE  
BINDINGS OF VAIRO,  
AND THE SECRET  
NAMES OF THE NIGHT  
BEASTS, AND COMMAND  
THEE TO COME  
FORWARD.)

(COME  
FORWARD.)





I CAN DO  
THIS.

I CAN FIGHT  
PAST THIS.

BUT MY LIMBS REFUSE  
TO COOPERATE, AND  
THE TORRENT OF  
IMAGES FROM THE  
DEAD MAN'S BLOOD  
IS UNRELENTING.



IT'S AS IF THE  
BASTARD'S  
MEMORIES ARE  
A BOMB.



DETONATING LIKE LAND  
MINES, CASTING OFF  
IMAGES OF TORTURE AND  
DEATH LIKE SHRAPNEL.

PLIP



WHO THE  
HELL IS THIS  
MAN?

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP

PLIP





SSHHHLUKKKT

HNNNGH!



HE'S DEAD. I  
KNOW HE IS.

I CAN SEE IT. I  
CAN SMELL IT.

HHNNNNH

SSHHHLUKT

SSSHLLLUCKK

THE SOUNDS HE'S  
MAKING ARE JUST  
HIS MOVEMENTS  
FORCING AIR OUT  
OF HIS LUNGS.

HRGGGK





IS THIS ANOTHER OF  
THE POWERS GRANTED  
TO HIM BY THE  
GIACOMINI APOCRYPHA?

LIKE THE ONES HE  
USED TO KILL A  
PASSENGER AIRLINER  
FULL OF PEOPLE?



WHAT IS IT  
THAT'S KEEPING  
HIM MOVING?



ALL RIGHT, YOU  
UGLY BASTARD.  
YOU'VE GOT MY  
ATTENTION.

WHO ARE  
YOU? WHAT DO  
YOU WANT?







WHAT I WANT WILL  
BE OBVIOUS SOON  
ENOUGH. YOU  
WON'T LIKE IT.

WHY AM I  
HERE? WELL, A  
DEAL'S A DEAL.

BUT FIRST  
THINGS FIRST.

I FIND IT'S  
ALWAYS BEST  
TO DO THINGS  
PROPERLY,  
ISN'T IT?

WHO AM I?  
WHAT'S IN A  
NAME?



I WAS A CHILD, BORN  
TO TRUE BELIEVERS.  
RULERS IN A COUNCIL  
OF...LIKE-MINDED  
INDIVIDUALS.



UNTIL OTHERS--MEN  
WHO LACKED THEIR  
VISION--DECLARED  
THEM HERETICS.



HOLY MOTHER CHURCH  
TRIED TO DESTROY MY  
PARENTS' TEACHINGS,  
BUT I HAD THE PRESENCE  
OF MIND TO ESCAPE,  
RESCUING WHAT I COULD.

LEARNING THEIR  
SECRETS.



LEARNING THE SECRET  
PATHWAYS BETWEEN  
HEAVEN AND HELL,  
THROUGH RITUAL AND  
SACRIFICE.

TRAFFICKING  
IN POWERS  
THAT HAVE  
KEPT ME  
ALIVE.

SO CESTUS DEI--  
NNNGH--KILLED  
YOUR FAMILY.

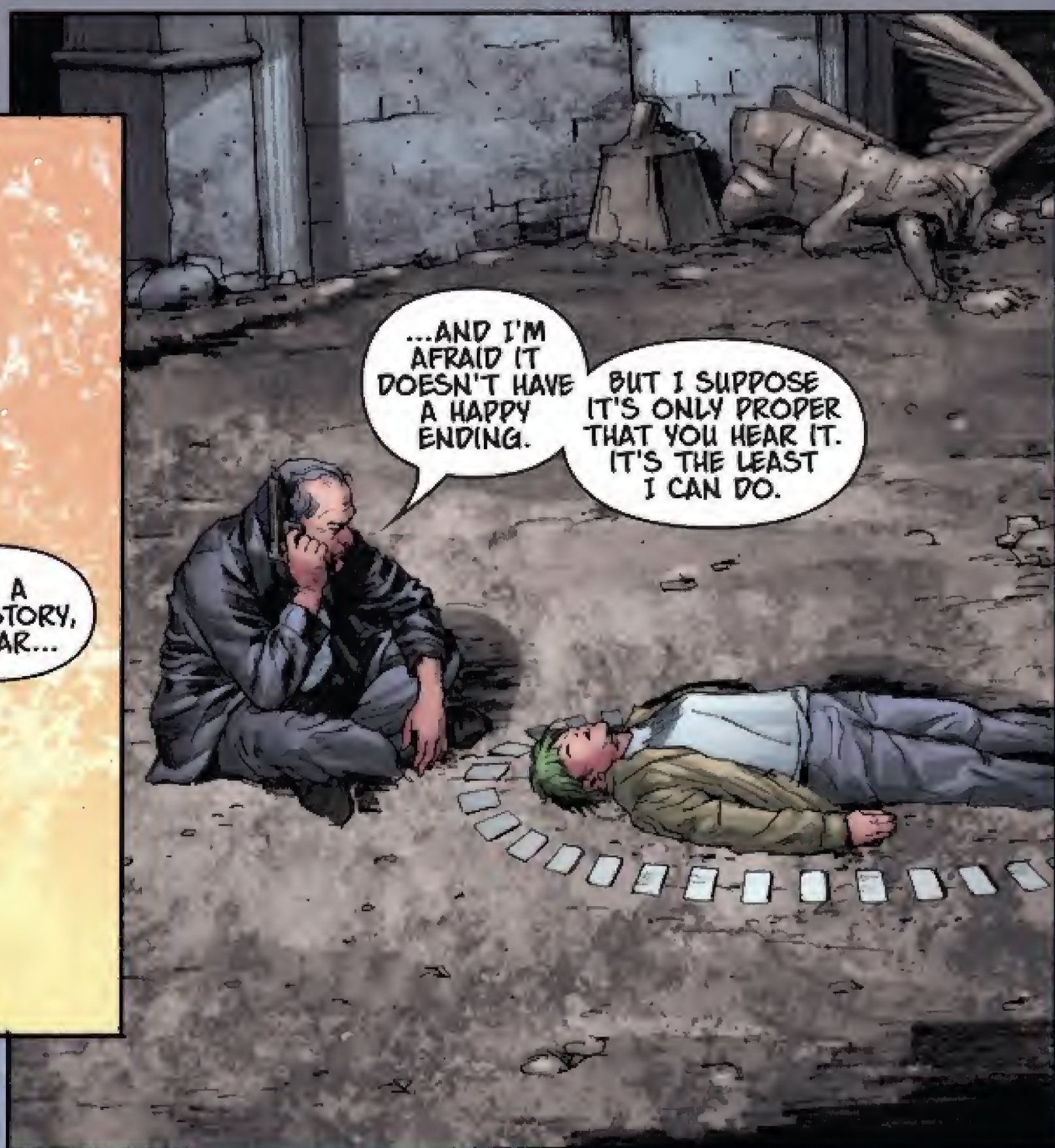
SIX HUNDRED  
YEARS AGO.



SO WHY  
MURDER THE  
PASSENGERS ON THE  
PLANE? WHY LURE  
ME HERE?

THEREIN LIES A TALE,  
CHILD OF HELL.  
THEREIN LIES A TALE.



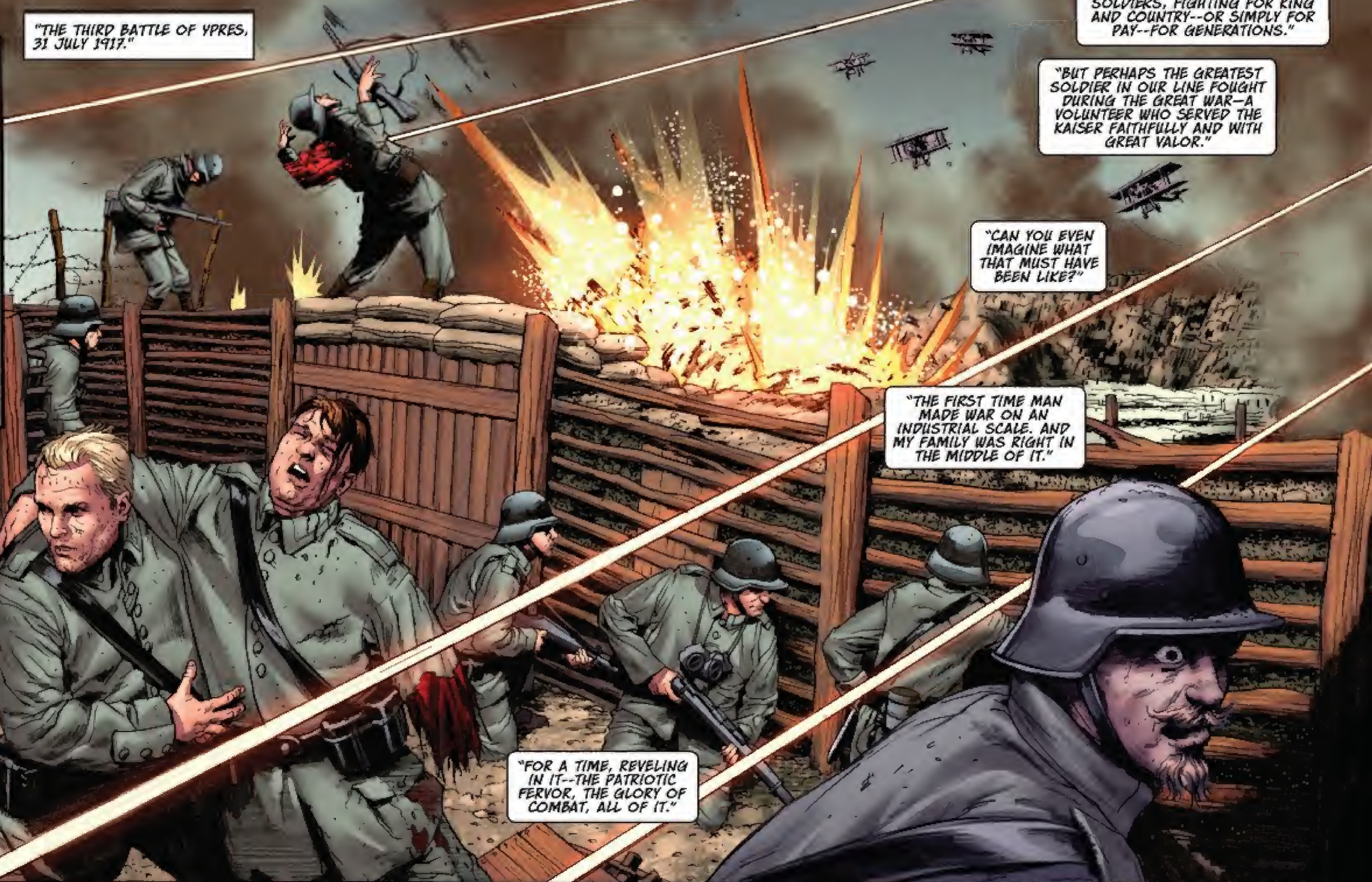






LIKE MOST TRAGEDIES, IT INVOLVES FAMILY.  
MY FAMILY, AND OUR SHAME.

"THE THIRD BATTLE OF YPRES, 31 JULY 1917."



"MY ANCESTORS HAVE ALL BEEN SOLDIERS, FIGHTING FOR KING AND COUNTRY--OR SIMPLY FOR PAY--FOR GENERATIONS."

"BUT PERHAPS THE GREATEST SOLDIER IN OUR LINE FOUGHT DURING THE GREAT WAR--A VOLUNTEER WHO SERVED THE KAISER FAITHFULLY AND WITH GREAT VALOR."

"CAN YOU EVEN IMAGINE WHAT THAT MUST HAVE BEEN LIKE?"

"THE FIRST TIME MAN MADE WAR ON AN INDUSTRIAL SCALE. AND MY FAMILY WAS RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF IT."

"FOR A TIME, REVELING IN IT--THE PATRIOTIC FERVOR, THE GLORY OF COMBAT, ALL OF IT."



"AFTER A BRITISH COUNTEROFFENSIVE NEAR YPRES, THAT ALL CHANGED."

"THERE WAS NO GLORY IN IT. JUST RANDOM DEATH THAT COULD STRIKE AT ANY TIME."

"HE TRIED TO DROWN HIS MEMORIES IN DENS OF SIN ACROSS EUROPE, INDULGING EVERY CONCEIVABLE VICE."

"TO NO AVAIL."

"THAT ALL HE WAS COULD BE SWEEP AWAY IN AN INSTANT BY AN ERRANT BULLET WAS MORE THAN HE COULD BEAR."

"SO HE BEGAN SEARCHING FOR AN ALTERNATIVE."

"A HELL OF A WAY FOR A YOUNG SOLDIER TO CONFRONT HIS OWN MORTALITY."







WHY DID I KILL THE "INNOCENTS" ON THE PLANE? TO HONOR AN...AGREEMENT.

AND REALLY, WHY NOT KILL THEM?

THEY WERE INSECTS.



THE PEOPLE YOU KILLED WERE

**NOT**

INSECTS.



OH, COME NOW.



NNGH!



TO THE LIKES OF YOU--OR THIS SHELL I WEAR-- THEY'RE LITTLE BETTER THAN CATTLE.

SHELL?



WHOOPS.

FIGURING OUT MY LITTLE TRICK, ARE YOU?



DARK MOTHER.



NO. BUT I'VE  
MET HER, OF  
COURSE.

YOU'VE GOT  
HER EYES.

I SHOULD  
THANK YOU  
FOR KILLING  
THIS LITTLE  
FACELESS  
BASTARD.

HE'D BARTERED  
HIS SOUL OFF  
TO ME YEARS  
AGO, AND  
ONCE IT  
VACATED HIS  
BODY, WELL...

...WHY LET SUCH  
EXCELLENT REAL  
ESTATE GO TO  
WASTE?

ALL OF HELL IS  
RESTLESS SINCE  
YAG-ATH VERMELLUS  
ALMOST CLAWED  
ITS WAY THROUGH  
INTO THIS WORLD.\*

YOU MET  
MY SERVANTS  
ALREADY, THE  
KARASU  
SHIMEI.\*\*

THEIR ESCAPE  
SHOWED ME THAT  
THE WALLS THAT  
HOLD US IN HELL  
ARE WEAKENED.

\* VAMPIRELLA: CROWN OF WORMS  
\*\* VAMPIRELLA: A MURDER OF CROWS

SO IT'S TIME  
TO STAKE  
MY CLAIM.

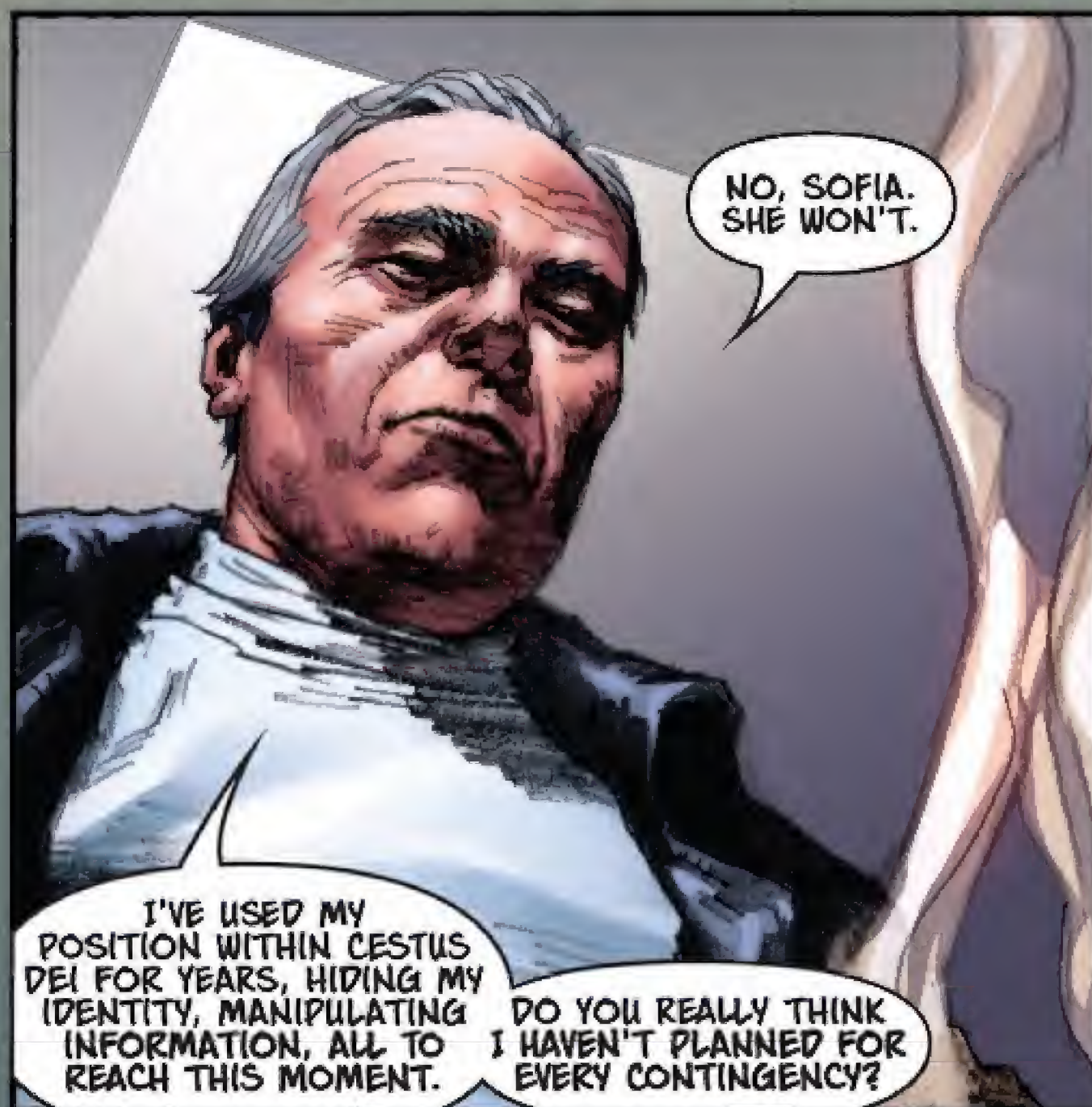
GET IN ON  
THE GROUND  
FLOOR, SO  
TO SPEAK.







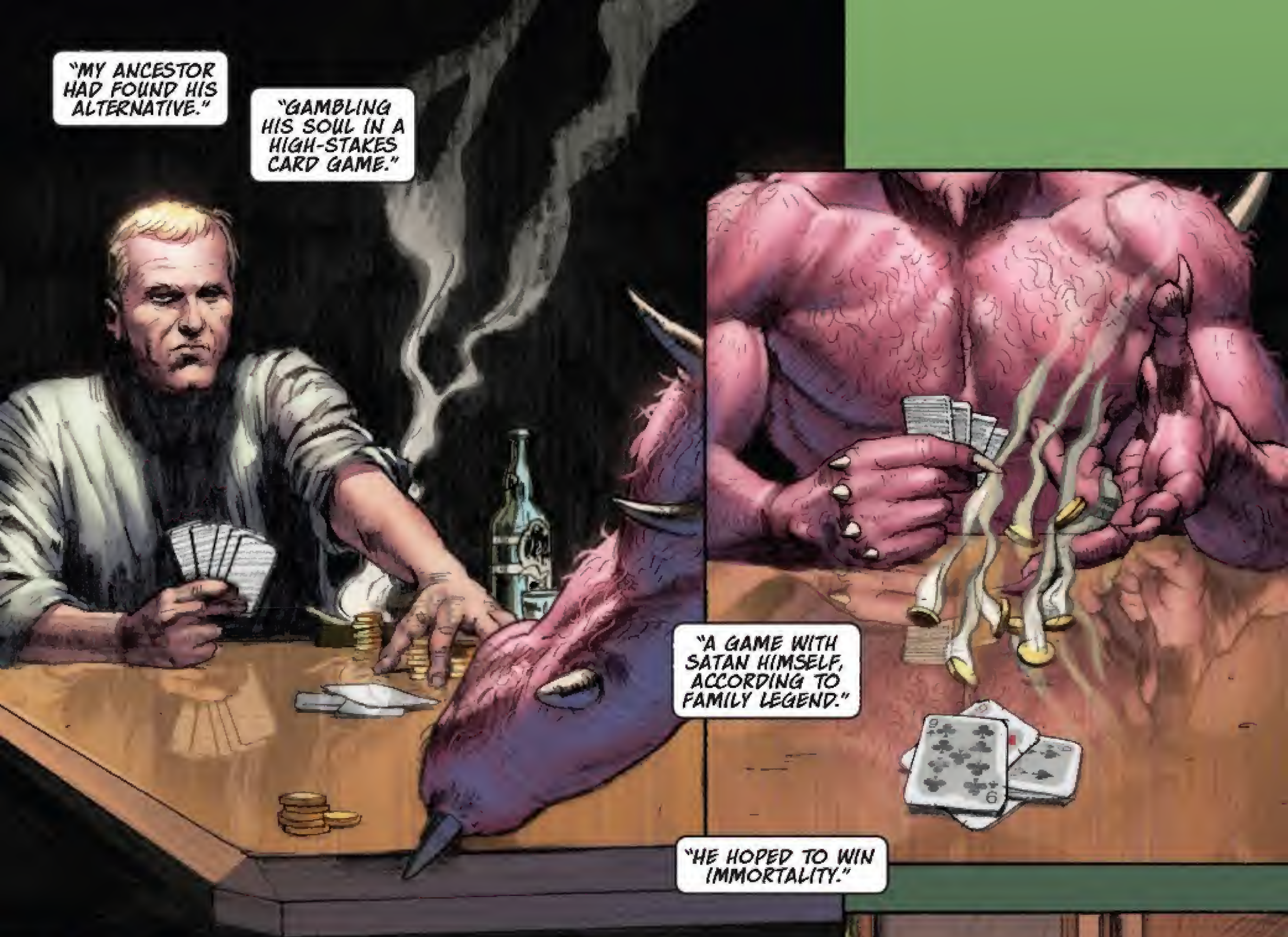
\*VAMPIRELLA #11.





"MY ANCESTOR  
HAD FOUND HIS  
ALTERNATIVE."

"GAMBLING  
HIS SOUL IN A  
HIGH-STAKES  
CARD GAME."



"A GAME WITH  
SATAN HIMSELF,  
ACCORDING TO  
FAMILY LEGEND."

"HE HOPED TO WIN  
IMMORTALITY."



"THE DEVIL CHEATED  
HIM, OF COURSE. HE  
GRANTED ETERNAL LIFE,  
BUT IN A ROTTING SHELL  
OF HUMAN MEAT."

"BUT MY KINSMAN  
WAS NO FOOL. HE  
BROUGHT MOST OF  
HIS SOUL TO THE  
TABLE..."



"...BUT HE'D LEFT  
A LITTLE PIECE OF  
HIMSELF IN THESE  
CARDS."





BUT HE  
WAS A BASTARD.  
A MONSTER.

TORTURE, RAPE,  
AND MURDER WERE  
SPORT FOR HIM. HE  
PARTICULARLY LIKED  
ABUSING YOUNG GIRLS,  
UNTIL HE WAS FINALLY  
DESTROYED IN THE  
NINETIES.

ALL EXCEPT  
THIS LAST  
LITTLE BIT.

'N YOU  
WAN' TO BRING  
TH' BASSARD  
BACK? WHY?



I CONSORTED  
WITH A DEMON.

I STOLE  
FRAGMENTS OF  
THE APOCRYPHA FROM  
CESTUS DEI AND SEEDED  
THEM AROUND THE GLOBE,  
KNOWING IT WOULD  
LURE SOMEONE FROM  
IL CONSIGLIO  
DEI VERMI.

I ENCOURAGED  
THE CARNAGE ON THE  
PLANE AND MADE SURE  
YOU WERE DIVERTED  
FROM GERMANY.

AND I MADE  
SURE THAT OUR  
FACELESS FRIEND  
HAD DONE WHAT  
WAS NECESSARY  
TO RESTRAIN  
VAMPIRELLA.



...PLEASE.

DON' DO  
THIS.



IT'S ALREADY  
DONE, CHILD.


HUNGGAH



I DON'T  
EXPECT  
FORGIVENESS  
FOR THIS.

BUT  
I'LL DO MY  
BEST TO MAKE  
IT QUICK.





"A DEAL'S A DEAL," IT SAID. SOME KIND OF RITUAL MUST HAVE SUMMONED IT HERE.

IN EXCHANGE FOR... WHAT? TRAPPING ME?

YOU KNOW, I'D FORGOTTEN HOW MUCH FUN FLESH CAN BE. THE FEEL OF THE BLADE SLICING IT OPEN, THE SPATTER OF BLOOD.

AND I DID SO MISS THE MUSIC OF SCREAMS.

SNK

BUT RITUALS MEAN RULES. AND THE DEMON MENTIONED THE KARASU SHIMEI, DEMON ASSASSINS I DESTROYED.

YOU'LL BE SINGING YOURSELF BACK TO HELL IN A MINUTE, BEAST...

TEMPORARILY ON THIS PLANE, ANCHORED BY TALISMANS--IN THEIR CASE, KABUKI MASKS--UNTIL THEY COULD COMPLETE A COMPLICATED BINDING.

...I CAN PROMISE YOU THAT.

DESTROY THE TALISMAN BEFORE THE BINDING IS COMPLETE, AND THEY HEAD STRAIGHT BACK TO HELL.

SO WHAT'S ANCHORING YOU HERE, MONSTER?

DEFIANCE IS GOOD.

WILL YOU STILL BE DEFIANT WHEN I'VE STRIPPED AWAY YOUR FLESH, AND MEAT, I WONDER?





OF COURSE. THE RITUAL SCARS ON HIS FACE, ACQUIRED OVER CENTURIES.

I DON'T KNOW.

--?!

SNICK



A LEDGER, WRITTEN IN FLESH AND PAIN, OF EVERY SACRIFICE HE MADE TO ATTAIN POWER FROM HELL.

WILL YOU STILL THINK DEFIANCE IS GOOD WHEN I KICK YOUR ASS BACK TO THE PIT?

BUT THERE'S A CATCH, OF COURSE. THERE ALWAYS IS, WHEN HELL'S INVOLVED.



NO WAIT GET AWAY



SURE, FOR A TIME YOU'LL HAVE POWER. POWER TO MURDER AND ESCAPE UNSEEN FROM A CROWDED PASSENGER JET.



GET AWAY, DAMN YOUR EYES!

POWER TO LIVE FOR HUNDREDS OF YEARS.

BUT PART OF THE PRICE OF USING THE APOCRYPHA LIKE HE HAS?

IT CAN TURN A HUMAN BODY INTO AN ANCHORING TALISMAN FOR A DEMON.



AND IF YOU  
DESTROY THE  
TALISMAN...



DAMN YOU  
CURSE YOU I'LL  
SEE YOU IN HELL,  
YOU UNBELIEVABLE  
BIIIIITCH...

--PLEASE  
IT HURTS  
STOP IT--

SOFIA?





I'M STILL FEELING  
THE EFFECTS OF THE  
DEMON-TAINTED  
BLOOD.

BUT I HEAR SOFIA'S  
SOBS. I SMELL SMOKE,  
CLOYING, LIKE INCENSE.

YEA,  
THOUGH I WALK  
THROUGH THE  
VALLEY OF THE  
SHADOW OF  
DEATH...

THAT AND THE SWEET,  
METALLIC SCENT OF  
GUN OIL.

...I SHALL  
F-FEAR NO  
EVIL...

NO NO NO  
NOOOO.

Nnnnnnggggh

KLIK

...I SH-  
SHALL FEAR  
NO EVIL...

W-WAIT!  
DON'T SHOOT!

I SHALL  
FEAR NO  
EVIL BECAUSE  
THOU ART  
WITH ME...





WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

KRAK



GET AWAY FROM HER!

--NNNNNGH!

KA-RAKK



--HAVE TO KILL HER YOU MUST KILL HER--

--BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE--

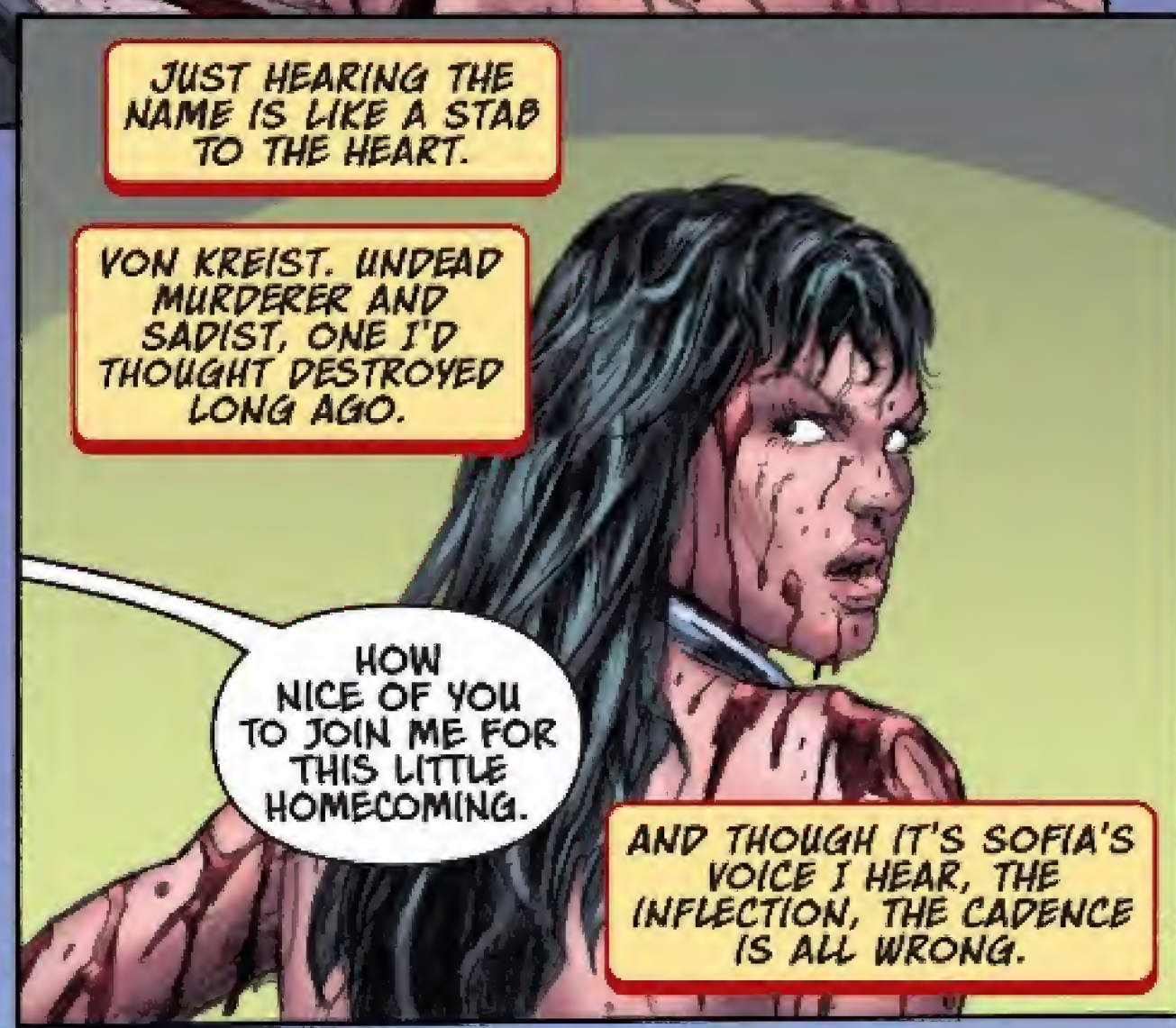
I WANT ANSWERS, SCHULD.

WAP

NAME... ISN'T SCHULD...



...MY FAMILY NAME IS VON KREIST...



JUST HEARING THE NAME IS LIKE A STAB TO THE HEART.

VON KREIST. UNDEAD MURDERER AND SADIST, ONE I'D THOUGHT DESTROYED LONG AGO.

HOW NICE OF YOU TO JOIN ME FOR THIS LITTLE HOMECOMING.

AND THOUGH IT'S SOFIA'S VOICE I HEAR, THE INFLECTION, THE CADENCE IS ALL WRONG.



AND ALL TOO  
FAMILIAR.

NOT THE  
FORM I WOULD HAVE  
CHOSEN FOR MYSELF,  
BUT IT'S NOT WITHOUT...  
AMUSING  
POSSIBILITIES.

NOW STEP  
ASIDE.

I NEED  
TO DISPOSE OF  
THAT EXCREMENT  
SMEAR WHO CALLS  
HIMSELF MY  
DESCENDANT...

...AND THEN I  
INTEND TO MAKE  
UP FOR AN AWFUL  
LOT OF LOST  
TIME.

**TO BE CONCLUDED**



DYNAMITE  
17

# VAMPIRELLA®





DYNAMITE  
17

# VAMPIRELLA®





DYNAMITE  
17

# VAMPIRELLA®



FABIANO



DYNAMITE  
17

# VAMPIRELLA



Vinicius  
Andrade



I'M PRACTICALLY  
IMPOSSIBLE TO  
KILL.

SURRENDER.

DO IT  
NOW, AND COME  
QUIETLY.



I DRINK  
BLOOD.

I DON'T  
WANT TO HURT  
YOU.

AH, BUT  
I WANT TO  
HURT YOU,  
VAMPIRELLA.

I CAN MESMERIZE  
SOMEONE WITH A  
GLANCE.

SO DO  
YOUR WORST,  
HELLWHORE.

I'M A  
MONSTER...

YOU'RE  
SURE YOU WANT  
TO SEE MY  
WORST?





CRYPTS BENEATH ANI  
ARMENIA/TURKEY BORDER  
0800 LOCAL TIME.



I'VE SEEN  
YOUR BEST BEFORE,  
VAMPIRELLA. I'M  
NOT PARTICULARLY  
IMPRESSED.

BUT I ALWAYS  
DID ADMIRE YOUR  
TASTE IN SIDE KICKS.  
THIS, SOFIA  
OF YOURS...

...SHE'S  
RATHER MY  
TYPE.

THIS ISN'T  
MY USUAL METHOD  
OF... INHABITING  
SUCH A DELICIOUS  
LITTLE MORSEL,  
OF COURSE.

IT'LL TAKE  
SOME GETTING  
USED TO,  
JAF.

HER BODY  
BELONGS TO MY  
FRIEND AND ALLY,  
SOFIA MURRAY.

BUT IT'S  
NOT SOFIA I'M  
TALKING TO.

YOU WON'T  
HAVE TIME TO GET  
COMFORTABLE.



AN OLD ENEMY  
HAS TAKEN UP  
RESIDENCE.

TSK TSK

THREATS?  
THAT IS NO WAY  
TO GREET AN OLD  
FRIEND, IS IT?

YOU WANT  
TO SAVE POOR  
LITTLE SOFIA FROM  
NASTY OLD VON  
KREIST.

WHICH I'M  
PREPARED TO  
MAKE MOST  
DIFFICULT.

I'M MORE  
OF A CARD/MAN,  
YOU KNOW, BUT  
I THINK THE  
PHRASE IS...



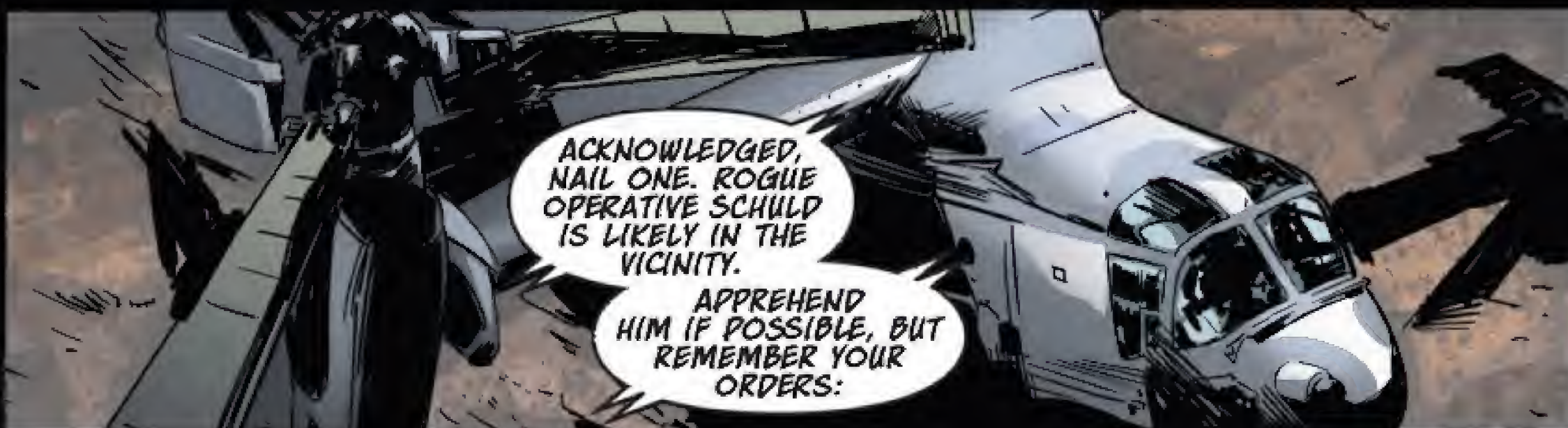




...CHECKMATE?

APPROX. 45KM S.E.  
OF KARS, TURKEY

NAIL ONE TO  
CROWN ACTUAL. TARGET  
VEHICLE SIGHTED. IT'S  
ONE OF OURS,  
CRISWELL.



ACKNOWLEDGED,  
NAIL ONE. ROGUE  
OPERATIVE SCHULD  
IS LIKELY IN THE  
VICINITY.

APPREHEND  
HIM IF POSSIBLE, BUT  
REMEMBER YOUR  
ORDERS:



STOP HIM,  
AT ANY COST.

GO WITH GOD.  
CROWN ACTUAL  
OUT.



YOU HEARD  
THE MAN.

CHALICE  
TEAM IS ON  
OVERWATCH...



...NAIL TEAM,  
LET'S KICK DOWN  
THE DOOR.



SUBTERRANEAN RUINS  
BENEATH ANI.

OH, COME  
NOW. YOU'RE  
SO DOUR!

I'VE BEEN  
AWAY FOR SO LONG.  
THERE'S NO REASON  
THIS CAN'T BE  
FUN.

THIS ALL  
STARTED IN  
GERMANY.

YOU'RE AN ANIMAL THAT SHOULD'VE  
BEEN PUT DOWN LONG AGO,  
VON KREIST.

YOU'RE HOLDING  
MY FRIEND'S BODY  
HOSTAGE. I CAN'T  
HURT YOU WITHOUT  
HURTING HER...

A PARTICULARLY NASTY  
EXORCISM SOFIA AND I  
HANDLED FOR THE VATICAN.

...UNLESS  
I TACKLE THE  
PROBLEM AT  
THE SOURCE.

ONE WHICH REQUIRED  
SOFIA'S PARTICULAR  
TALENT.\*

\*SEE VAMPIRELLA #11...  
IF YOU DARE.--J.R.

--WHA?

WE SHARE A BOND, ONE I  
DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND.  
BUT LIKE VAMPIRES AND  
HOUSES...

I'VE BEEN  
INVITED IN  
BEFORE.



THIS TIME IS  
DIFFERENT.



BEFORE, SOFIA  
HAD CONSTRUCTED  
A LUSH, BEAUTIFUL  
MINDSCAPE.

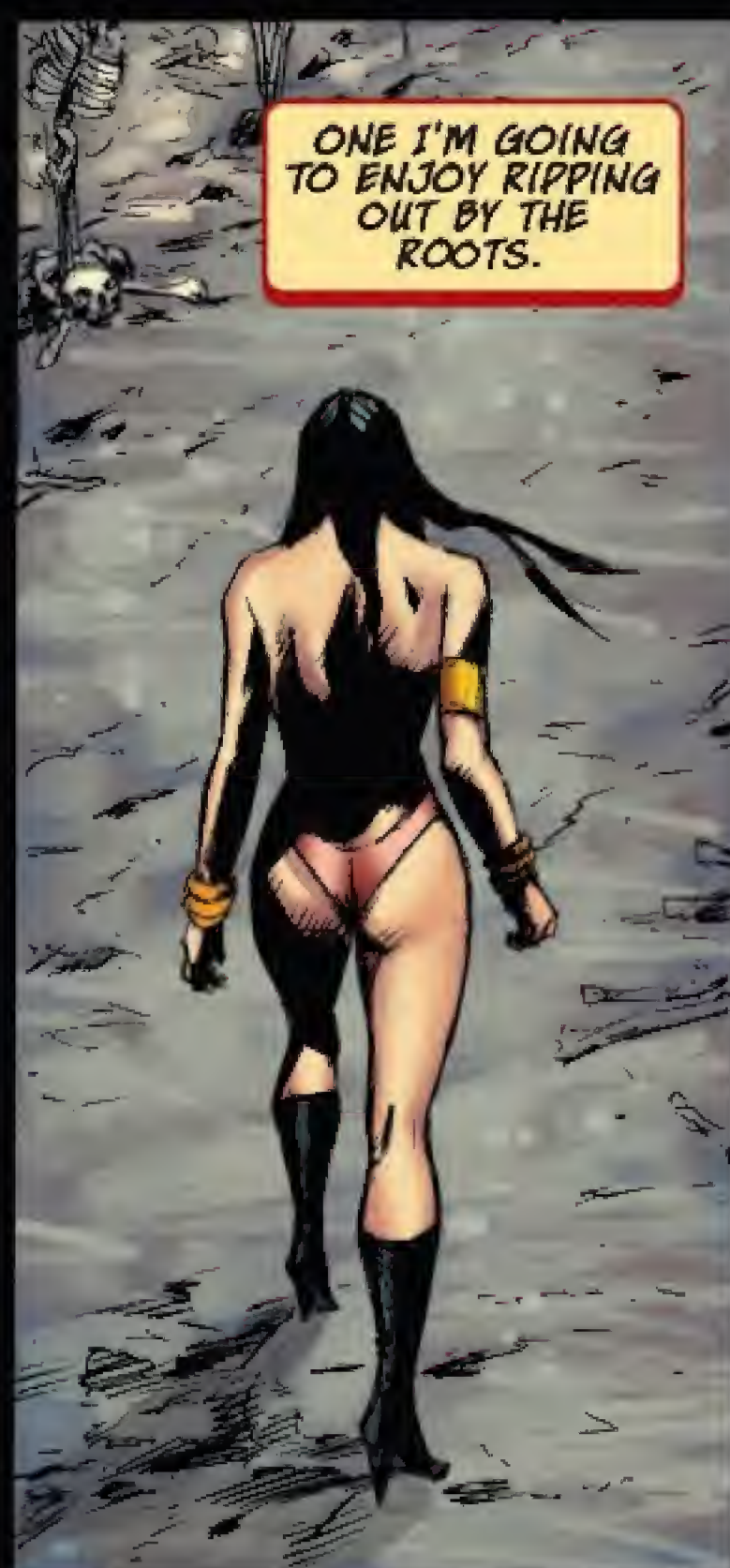
HER MIND WAS  
LIKE A SUNLIT  
GARDEN.

THAT'S ALL  
CHANGED.



VON KREIST  
HAS INVADDED THE  
GARDEN LIKE AN  
EVIL WEED.

ONE I'M GOING  
TO ENJOY RIPPING  
OUT BY THE  
ROOTS.





OUTSKIRTS OF ANI.

CABIN SECURED.  
ALL CLEAR.

HITTING THE  
COCKPIT.



ALL DEAD.

DÓMINUS  
VOBISCUM.



FORM  
UP ON ME,  
BOYS...



IT'S GOING  
TO BE ANOTHER  
BAD ONE.

--OH, LORD. NOT  
ANOTHER WEREWOLF,  
I HOPE. I HATE  
WEREWOLVES--



NAIL  
ONE TO CROWN  
ACTUAL.  
TARGET  
VEHICLE SECURED,  
NO SIGN OF  
SCHULD OR HIS  
TEAM. PILOTS  
ARE DEAD.

...YOU KNOW  
WHAT YOU HAVE TO  
DO, HAWKING. WE  
PLACED TRACKERS ON  
SOME OF THEIR  
WEAPONS LOAD-OUT,  
BUT LOST THEM  
IN THE RUINS.

ROGER.  
OUT.



CHALICE, HOLD  
THIS SITE.

NAIL,  
ON ME.

WE'VE GOT  
A RESURRECTION  
EVENT TO STOP.





ELSEWHERE.

BE  
STRONG.

OF COURSE, THE DEVIL  
CHEATED HIM, KEEPING  
HIM ALIVE INSIDE A  
ROTTING, DEAD  
SHELL--AN UNDEAD,  
DERANGED MONSTER.

FINALLY, HIS  
BODY WAS  
DESTROYED.

I'M COMING  
SOFIA.

VON KREIST IS A  
TACTICIAN. A WORLD  
WAR I PRUSSIAN  
SOLDIER WHO TRADED  
HIS SOUL TO THE  
DEVIL FOR  
IMMORTALITY.

I DON'T REVEL IN DEATH,  
BUT A WORLD FREE OF  
VON KREIST--A SADIST  
AND MURDERER WITH A  
PREFERENCE FOR YOUNG  
GIRLS--IS A CONCEPT I'M  
COMFORTABLE WITH.

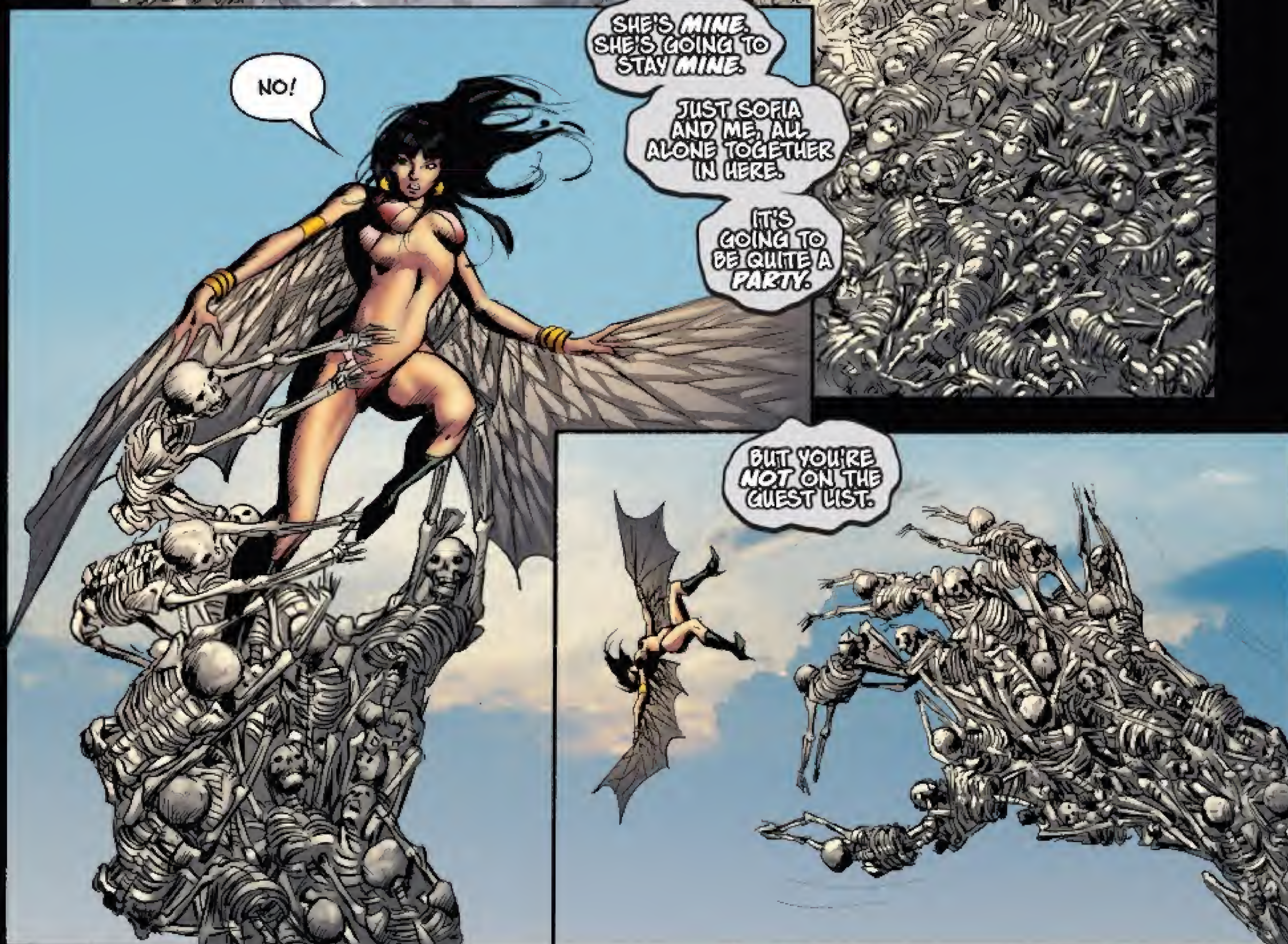
I DON'T KNOW WHY  
SCHULD RESURRECTED  
YOU, VON KREIST, BUT  
IT'S GOING TO BE A  
SHORT-LIVED REBIRTH.





YOU  
REALLY DON'T  
UNDERSTAND,  
DO YOU?

YOU  
HONESTLY  
THINK YOU'RE  
GOING TO  
WIN.



NO!

SHE'S MINE.  
SHE'S GOING TO  
STAY MINE.

JUST SOFIA  
AND ME, ALL  
ALONE TOGETHER  
IN HERE.

IT'S  
GOING TO  
BE QUITE A  
PARTY.

BUT YOU'RE  
NOT ON THE  
GUEST LIST.





≡GASP!≡



SURPRISED?

I'VE BEEN STUCK  
IN A HAUNTED DECK  
OF CARDS FOR  
DECADES. PLENTY  
OF TIME TO  
PLAN.



I'M SO GLAD YOU'RE  
HERE FOR THIS,  
VAMPIRELLA.

THAT YOU'D  
BE HERE FOR MY  
TRIUMPHANT  
RETURN WAS MORE  
THAN I COULD'VE  
HOPED FOR.



NNNGH

YOU DON'T  
REALLY THINK  
THIS WILL HURT  
ME, DO YOU?

KPOW

KPOW

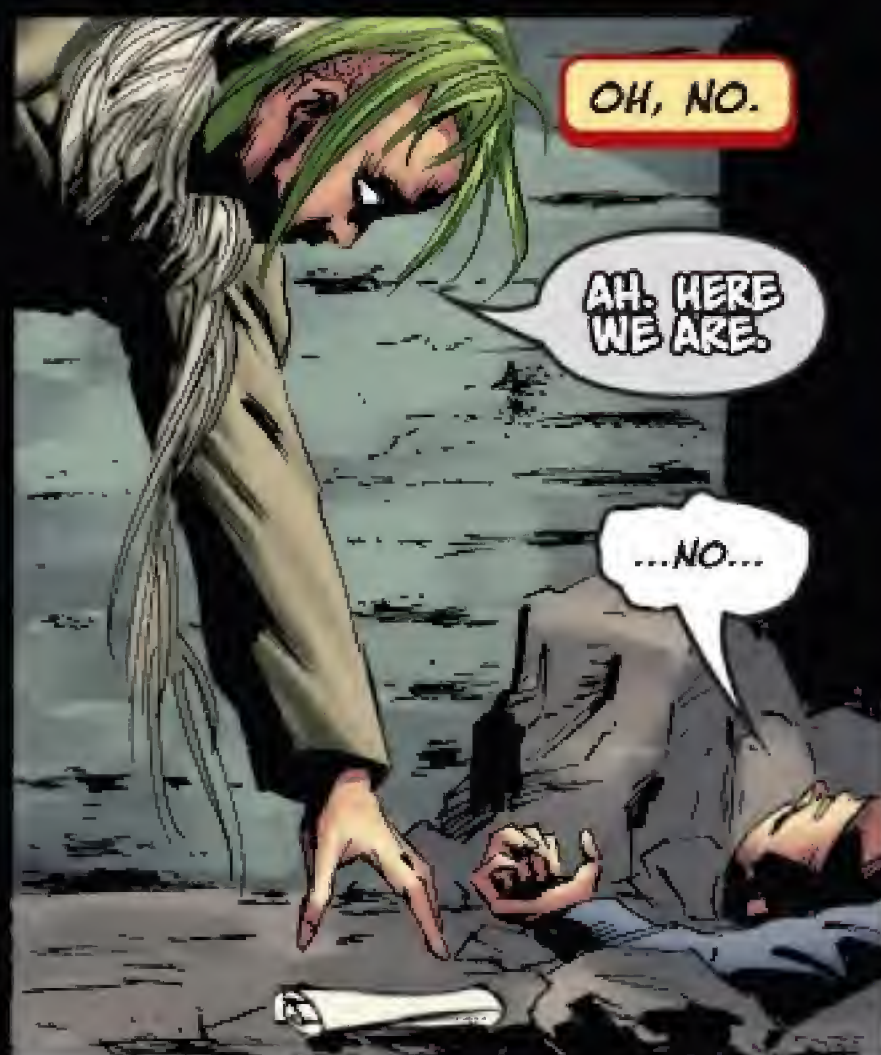
KPOW



I'VE ALREADY  
HURT YOU.

THAT WAS  
JUST TO KEEP YOU  
DISTRACTED WHILE  
I VISIT WITH MY  
WORTHLESS  
KINSMAN HERE.





OH, NO.

AH, HERE WE ARE.

...NO...

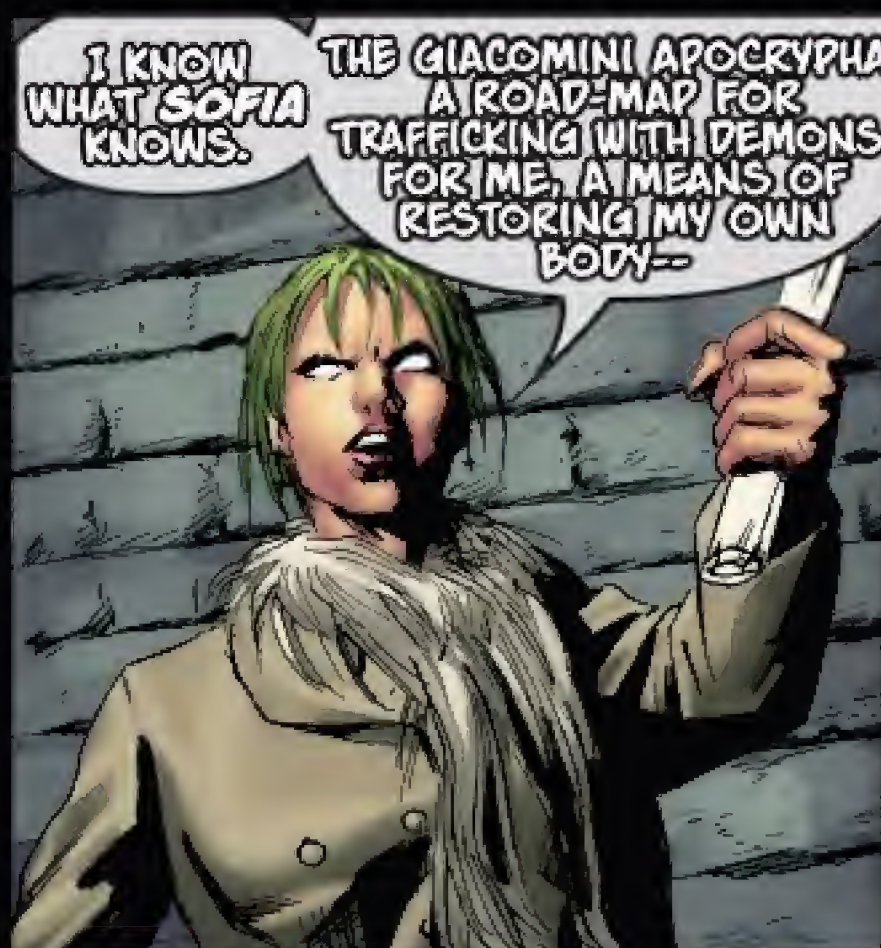


WUNDERBAR.

HE'S BEEN LOCKED AWAY IN A MYSTICAL PRISON FOR YEARS. HE CAN'T KNOW WHAT THE GIACOMINI APOCRYPHA IS, OR WHAT IT CAN DO IN THE WRONG HANDS.



A PIECE OF PAPER? LET ME GUESS: YOU'VE TAKEN UP ORIGAMI.



I KNOW WHAT SOFIA KNOWS.

THE GIACOMINI APOCRYPHA. A ROAD-MAP FOR TRAFFICKING WITH DEMONS. FOR ME, A MEANS OF RESTORING MY OWN BODY--



HOLD STILL, SMILE FOR THE CAMERA...

??



TINK



...AND WAIT FOR THE FLASH.

KRAK BANNNNNNNG



THEY'RE CALLED  
GROUP ZERO.

THE VATICAN'S COVERT  
ACTION UNIT, RUN BY  
CESTUS DEI--THE CHURCH'S  
MONSTER-HUNTING  
INTELLIGENCE SERVICE.

THE SAME GROUP THAT  
HAS PROVIDED ME WITH  
TRAINING, WEAPONS AND  
INTEL SINCE MY RETURN.

IF THEY'RE  
HERE, THEY'RE  
HERE TO KILL.

YOU!  
DROP THE  
GUN AND THE  
DOCUMENT  
AND DO NOT  
MOVE!

VAMPIRELLA,  
STAND  
DOWN!

HOLD YOUR  
FIRE! HOLD  
YOUR FIRE!

SCHILD  
WAS ROGUE,  
VAMPIRELLA.

HE MOVED YOU TO RUSSIA  
WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION. WE  
THINK IT'S A RESURRECTION  
SCENARIO.

I'M NOT  
TELLING YOU  
AGAIN. BACK  
OFF.

THEY DON'T KNOW. THEY  
DON'T KNOW THAT VON  
KREIST IS BACK.

AND IF THEY DID  
KNOW, NOTHING  
WOULD STOP  
THEM.

THEY WON'T  
HESITATE.

THEY WON'T  
MISS.

KAPOW

THEY'LL GUN SOFIA  
DOWN JUST TO GET  
THE MONSTER.



I HATE THIS FEELING.

THAT SINGLE, CRYSTAL-CLEAR MOMENT WHERE EVERYTHING STOPS, JUST FOR A SECOND...

NO!

WAIT! YOU DON'T--

...BEFORE ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

CONTACT!  
CONTACT!

BRAAA  
BRAK

BRAK  
BRAK  
BRAK

BRAK

BRAK

BRAK

AND THROUGH IT ALL, I CAN HEAR VON KREIST LAUGHING, MOCKING ME WITH MY FRIEND'S VOICE.

KNOWING THAT, IN STARTING THIS FIREFIGHT...

THAT'S RIGHT, LITTLE MEN. MAKE A FIGHT OF IT.

KPOW KPOW  
SPANG

HA  
HAHA  
HA!

PANG

TANG

PANG

...I'LL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO PROTECT HIM.

ENOUGH!

YOU IDIOTS ARE PLAYING INTO HIS HANDS!







I COULD MESMERIZE THEM ALL, BUT THE BACKLASH FROM MY ENCOUNTER WITH VON KREIST IS AFFECTING ME.

SO IT'S DOWN TO MUSCLE AND SPEED.

GGNNH

CALL THEM OFF. NOW.



AND IN THAT ARENA, THEY'RE HOPELESSLY OUTCLASSED.

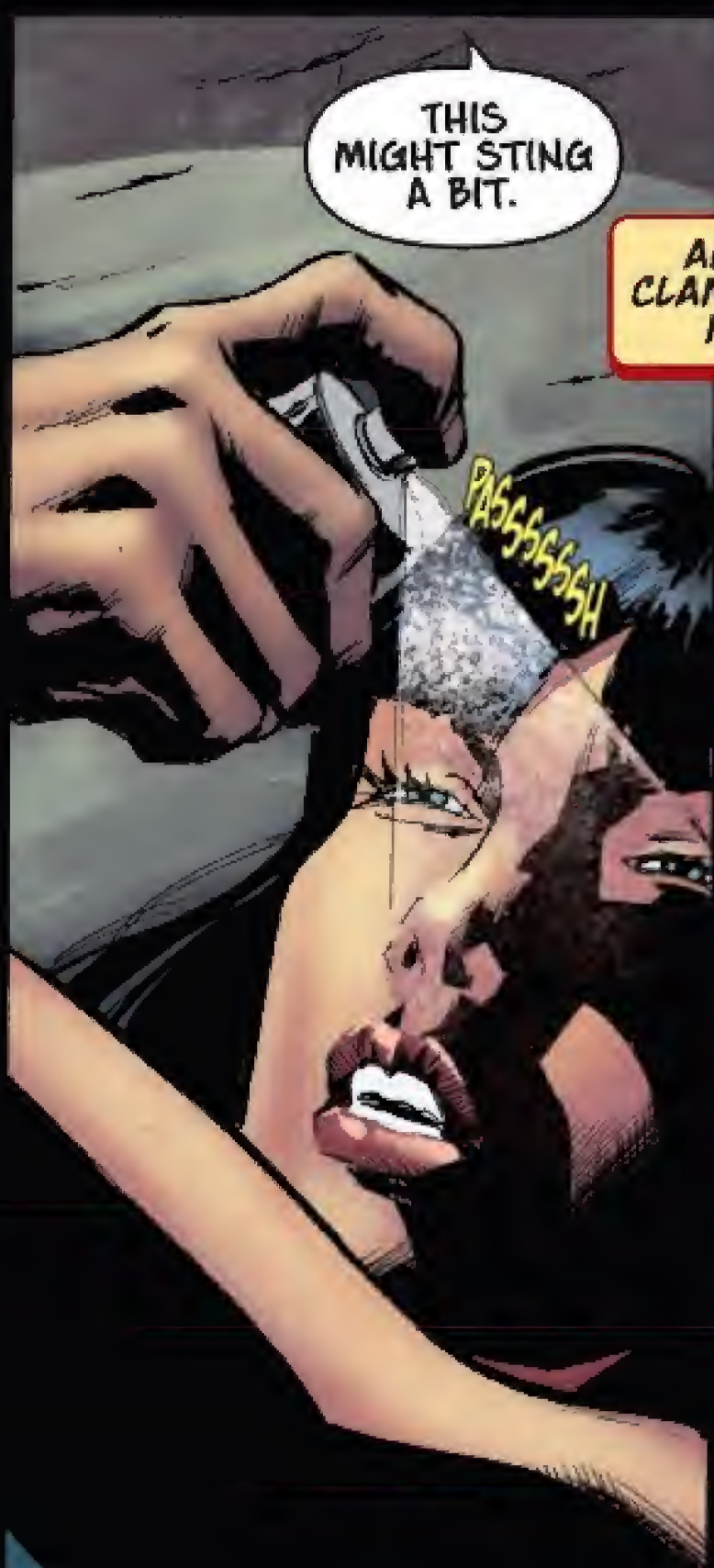
DON'T MAKE ME DO THIS.

I SYMPATHIZE...

WE NEED TO CAPTURE HER, NOT KILL HER.



...BUT I HAVE MY ORDERS.



THIS MIGHT STING A BIT.

AN ICY VICE CLAMPS ACROSS MY FACE.



AAAHH

I DON'T WANT TO KILL YOU, VAMPIRELLA.





CAN'T SEE.

WE CALL IT "LIGHTS OUT." A BLINDING AGENT. SUPER ADHESIVE TO SKIN AND BONE, FAST-HARDENING AND COMPLETELY LIGHT-TIGHT. WON'T KILL YOU, OF COURSE.

CONSIDER THIS A PROFESSIONAL COURTESY.



CAN'T SEE.

...DON'T MAKE ME USE SOMETHING THAT WILL.



CAN'T SEE ANYTHING.



OPENA, BRÜST, ON ME. VON EHRENKROOK, YOU'VE GOT OVERWATCH.

ROGER THAT. LET'S GO BAG A BOOGIEMAN.

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL HER.

THEY'RE GOING TO KILL MY FRIEND.



THEY'RE GOING TO  
KILL SOFIA TO GET  
THE MONSTER  
INSIDE OF HER.

NO.

LEAVING ANOTHER  
YOUNG, INNOCENT  
GIRL A VICTIM OF VON  
KREIST'S MADNESS.

NNNGAH!

SHHHHRRRIIPP

THAT'S NOT  
SOMETHING I  
CAN LIVE WITH.





CONTACT SIX!

CONTACT ON MY SIX!

HAVE TO MOVE FAST.

NOT TO WORRY.

SNIPER IS GREEN.

HIT JUST HARD ENOUGH.

I DON'T WANT TO KILL THEM...



...DESPITE THE TEMPTATION.

NNNGH

KABOOOOM



GET IN CLOSE. PREVENT THE SNIPER FROM TAKING A SHOT.

SOAK UP THE DAMAGE. HEAL LATER. IT'S NOTHING.



CONTACT ENGAGED.

WHUD



DAMN HIM.  
HAWKING'S TOO  
GOOD. STAYS ON  
MISSION. STAYS  
ON TARGET.

KNOWS HIS MEN ARE GOOD  
ENOUGH TO TIE ME UP  
LONG ENOUGH FOR HIM TO  
ACHIEVE HIS OBJECTIVE.



BUT HE'S UP  
AGAINST  
VON KREIST.



NO PLAN SURVIVES  
DIRECT CONTACT  
WITH THAT BASTARD.

CRAP.

OVERWATCH,  
GIVE ME A  
LOCATION ON  
PRIMARY  
TARGET.



NO TARGET.  
I SAY AGAIN,  
I DO NOT HAVE  
EYES ON  
TARGET.



PITY.

THE  
TARGET HAS EYES  
ON YOU.







FALL BACK!  
FALL BACK AND  
REACQUIRE.  
TARGET IS IN  
THE WIND.



DAMN IT,  
STOP!

THE TARGET IS  
POSSESSING THE BODY  
OF AN INNOCENT  
GIRL. YOU'RE GOING  
TO KILL A HUMAN  
SHIELD!

AND YOU HAVE  
A MAN DOWN,  
SOLDIER.



CHRIST  
ALMIGHTY.

MASSIVE  
HEAD TRAUMA.  
OPENA, GET UP  
HERE AND GIVE  
ME A HAND.



WE HAVE TO  
CAPTURE HER, NOT  
KILL HER. I DON'T  
GIVE A DAMN  
ABOUT YOUR  
ORDERS.

IF IT'S A  
POSSESSION,  
THEN WE'RE  
REALLY DEALING  
WITH A *HOSTAGE*  
*SITUATION*.

THAT RARELY  
ENDS WELL FOR THE  
HOSTAGE. SHE'S DEAD  
ALREADY. YOU *KNOW* IT.



I ALSO KNOW WHAT  
YOU'RE UP AGAINST. IF  
YOU UNDERESTIMATE  
HIM...

I ALSO KNOW WHAT  
YOU'RE UP AGAINST. IF  
YOU UNDERESTIMATE  
HIM...

--SOMETHING  
UNDER HIM--

...YOU'RE  
ALL GOING  
TO DIE.

SPANG

--SON  
OF A--

**GRENADE!**



THAT FROZEN  
MOMENT, ACID  
ETCHED. ADRENALINE  
AND FEAR SLAMS  
THROUGH THEM,  
BURNING IN MY  
NOSTRILS.



THE OILY, METALLIC  
SMELL OF THE  
GRENADE. THE GREASY  
ODOR OF EXPLOSIVES.



GO TO HELL, VON  
KREIST. I'M TIRED  
OF YOU LEAVING  
BODIES AT MY FEET.



AND THEN A  
TRAIN SLAMS  
INTO ME.



A FAREWELL GIFT  
FROM THE ANIMAL  
I'M HUNTING. AND  
A MESSAGE.



"I'LL SEE YOU  
SOON,  
VAMPIRELLA."







...WE'RE SENDING  
IN MORE TEAMS TO  
SEARCH THE AREA  
FOR HER...HIM.  
IT.

YOU WON'T  
FIND HIM.

CITY OF ANI  
CESTUS DEI RECOVERY  
OPERATION IN PROGRESS  
1750 LOCAL TIME

MAYBE NOT  
TODAY. BUT I  
ALWAYS FIND  
MY TARGET.

ANOTHER GIFT. THE  
GRENADE BROUGHT DOWN  
A SECTION OF TUNNEL. IT  
TOOK NEARLY TWO HOURS  
TO GET ABOVE GROUND.



ALL THE TIME IN THE  
WORLD FOR VON  
KREIST TO DISAPPEAR,  
WITH THE GIACOMINI  
APOCRYPHA.

I'VE HAD  
BETTER DAYS,  
VAMPIRELLA.

A MAN I  
RESPECTED HAS  
GONE ROGUE AND  
IS NOW IN A COMA,  
THANKS TO YOU.

I'VE GOT A MAN DOWN, AND  
A MAJOR RESURRECTION EVENT  
JUST HAPPENED ON MY WATCH.

MESSY.



MAKE SOFIA  
ITY TARGET,  
AND SOMEDAY SOON,  
THEY'LL LEAVE HER  
CORPSE IN AN ALLEY  
IN PRAGUE OR  
SOMEWHERE.

CRISWELL WANTS  
YOU IN FOR DEBRIEF.  
I'M TO MAKE SURE  
THAT HAPPENS.

AND IF I  
REFUSE?

WELL. THAT WOULD  
BE A HELL OF A THING.



ANOTHER CASUALTY  
OF CESTUS DEI'S  
SECRET LITTLE WAR.

I OWE  
YOU FOR  
PROTECTING  
MY MEN.

IF I HAVE  
TO, I'LL TELL  
CRISWELL YOU  
ESCAPED IN THE  
GRENADE  
BLAST.

BUT IF YOU WANT  
TO MAKE SURE SOFIA  
IS RECOVERED SAFELY, I'D  
THINK YOU'D WANT TO  
KEEP AN EYE ON US.

YOUR CALL,  
OF COURSE.



A WAR IT FEELS  
LIKE WE'RE ALL  
LOSING.

...FINE.

LET'S GET  
THE HELL OUT  
OF HERE.

THE END NEXT:  
THRONE OF  
SKULLS



DYNAMITE  
18

# VAMPIRELLA®



2011  
JP



DYNAMITE  
18

# VAMPIRELLA®



Reynolds  
2011



DYNAMITE  
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# VAMPIRELLA®





PROLOGUE

YOU'RE SURE  
YOU KNOW  
WHAT YOU'RE  
DOING?

DON'T I  
ALWAYS?

TOO TOUGH TO CALL,  
GIVEN YOUR HISTORY.  
BUT YOU ALWAYS DID  
THINK BIG.

THAT'S ONE OF  
THE THINGS I'VE  
ALWAYS LIKED  
ABOUT YOU, VLAD.

STILL, FROM DOWN HERE  
IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE BEEN  
LOSING YOUR EDGE. HOW  
MANY TIMES HAS A VAN  
HELSEING OR VAMPIRELLA  
DRIVEN A STAKE THROUGH  
YOUR PLANS?

SO TO  
SPEAK.

TOO MANY  
TIMES.

BUT YOU  
KNOW ALL ABOUT  
THAT TOO, DON'T  
YOU, **BOTIS**?

THAT'S RIGHT.  
I KNOW YOUR TRUE  
NAME. **BOTIS**, EARL  
OF HELL, MASTER  
OF THE KARASU  
SHIMEI.\*

THE DEMON  
WHO WAS JUST  
TROCUNED BY  
VAMPIRELLA  
AT ANI.\*\*

...YOU KNOW  
QUITE A LOT,  
DON'T YOU?

IT PAYS TO  
STAY INFORMED,  
DEMON.

I WAS ONCE A  
PRINCE. A YEAR  
AGO, I ALMOST  
WORE THE CROWN  
OF WORMS.

I AM VLAD  
DRACULA, AND  
I WILL RULE THIS  
WORLD FROM  
A THRONE OF  
SKULLS.

AND, SINCE I KNOW  
YOUR TRUE NAME, AND  
THUS HAVE **POWER** OVER  
YOU, YOU'RE GOING TO  
DO **YOUR** PART.

IT'S YOUR  
FUNERAL.

\* VAMPIRELLA: A MURDER OF CROWS TP  
\*\* VAMPIRELLA #16--J.R.





...WE'LL SEE,  
I SUPPOSE.



LORDS OF  
ORDER AND  
CHAOS...

I'D FORGOTTEN  
HOW GOOD THE  
SUN FEELS.



(A LOVELY  
DAY, IS IT  
NOT?)

(Y-YES  
IT (-IS.)



(A PITY  
TO WASTE  
SUCH A LOVELY  
MORNING.)

(BUT  
THERE'S SO  
MUCH WORK  
YET TO BE  
DONE...)



(...AND  
IDLE HANDS  
ARE THE DEVIL'S  
WORKSHOP,  
YES?)

HA HA  
HA HA HA  
HAAAA!

END PROLOGUE



--CLEANUP  
CREW REPORTING  
IN--

--RELIEF  
UNIT EN ROUTE  
TO ANI--

GOD ALMIGHTY.  
DOESN'T FEEL  
RIGHT.

HM?

--NEED AT  
LEAST ONE MORE  
OSPREY--

IT'S BEEN  
JUST OVER  
A WEEK.

CAN'T GET  
USED TO ONE OF  
THOSE... THINGS  
RUNNING LOOSE  
IN HERE.

BETTER  
GET USED  
TO IT...

EIGHT DAYS  
OF SEARCHING, OF  
HUNTING FOR CLUES.

INNER SANCTUM  
OF THE VESTRY  
CESTUS DEI'S  
WAR ROOM

...THERE  
BE MONSTERS  
HERE.

OF CESTUS DEI--THE  
VATICAN'S COVERT PARANORMAL  
STRIKE FORCE--USING THEIR  
NOT-INCONSIDERABLE RESOURCES  
TO HUNT FOR A SIGN, ANY SIGN,  
OF MY FRIEND:

SOFIA MURRAY, A BRAVE  
AND RESOURCEFUL YOUNG  
WOMAN WHO STOOD AT  
MY SIDE IN THE BATTLE  
AGAINST AN ANCIENT  
GOD OF HUNGER.

WHO WAS INSTRUMENTAL  
IN THE DEFEAT OF THE  
KARASU SHIMEI--A TRIO  
OF HELLBORN ASSASSINS  
WHO HAD ESCAPED FROM  
THE PIT BENT ON MURDER  
AND CARNAGE.

WHO LOOKED  
DRACULA HIMSELF  
DEAD IN THE EYE  
WITHOUT BLINKING.

--MAY HAVE  
SLIPPED OVER  
THE BORDER--

--REQUEST  
FROM NAIL ONE  
TO RETURN TO  
FIELD--

SOFIA MURRAY, BETRAYED  
BY AN ALLY AND FORCED TO  
HOST THE BLACK, TWISTED  
SOUL OF A SAPISTIC  
MURDERER, VON KREIST.

YOU LOOK  
RESTLESS.

THE YOUNG  
GIRL THAT  
CESTUS DEI  
TRIED TO KILL.

I'VE BEEN  
COOPED UP HERE  
FOR A WEEK. I  
SHOULD BE OUT  
THERE, LOOKING  
FOR HER.

I HAVE  
NEWS THAT  
SHOULD CHEER  
YOU UP.

--STATION  
PRAGUE MAY  
HAVE HAD A  
SIGHTING--

--NO FAMILY  
LEFT, SEATTLE  
TEAM SHOWS  
NEGATIVE  
RESULT OF  
SURVEILLANCE--

--CRISWELL  
NEEDS A SITREP  
PIPED TO HIS  
WORKSTATION--

--GET ME  
SAT UPLINK TO  
MOSCOW--

--ANI TEAM  
IS SHOWING  
NO TRACES--



HIS NAME IS CRISWELL.

A PROTEGE OF MY OLD HANDLER, SCHULD.

A SENIOR ADMINISTRATOR, COORDINATING CESTUS DEI'S OPERATIONS AROUND THE GLOBE.

MEDICAL RANG. HE'S STARTING TO COME OUT OF THE COMA.

WE'LL BE STARTING THE DEBRIEF SOON, BUT YOU HAD EXPRESSED INTEREST IN BEING THE FIRST TO SPEAK TO HIM.

I HAD EXPRESSED THE IDEA THAT, IF YOU DON'T LET ME SPEAK TO HIM, I'LL PULL THIS PLACE DOWN AROUND YOU.

TO-MAY-TO, TO-MAH-TO, MY DEAR.

DESPITE OUR RECENT DIFFERENCES, WE'VE HAD A VALUABLE COLLABORATION IN THE PAST.

I HAVE FAITH THAT OUR ALLIANCE CAN CONTINUE.

I CAN'T SAY I LIKE HIM--OR HIS MASTERS--MUCH.

SO, A SHOW OF GOOD FAITH.

WHAT'S THE OLD LINE?

SO LET HIM SWEAT A BIT.

DEEET

ENTER FREELY, ET CETERA?

A LITTLE SUFFERING IS GOOD FOR THE SOUL, AFTER ALL.

SHALL WE?

WE? NO. I'LL TALK TO HIM ALONE.

I'M, AH, NOT SURE THAT'S THE BEST IDEA. GIVEN YOUR HISTORY--

YOU WANT ME TO TRUST YOU?

YOU CAN START BY TRUSTING ME, CRISWELL. AND BY GETTING THE HELL OUT OF MY WAY.



CRISWELL IS RIGHT  
TO WORRY.

THE TUB OF EXCREMENT  
IN THE HOSPITAL BED WAS  
SUPPOSED TO BE AN ALLY.  
A CONTACT WITH CESTUS  
DEI WHO PROVIDED INTEL,  
ARMAMENTS, RESOURCES.

WHO PROVIDED ME  
WITH TARGETS IN  
MY WAR AGAINST  
THE DARKNESS.

HERR  
SCHULD.

IT WAS NEVER THE  
MOST COMFORTABLE  
OF ALLIANCES, BUT  
EVEN I DIDN'T SEE HIS  
BETRAYAL COMING.

HELLO,  
MY DEAR.

OR SHOULD  
I SAY, HERR  
VON KREIST?

I WANT HIM DEAD  
MORE THAN ANYONE  
ELSE IN THE WORLD.

EXCUSE ME...  
**MISS**. THIS  
PATIENT IS  
RECOVERING FROM  
A SEVERE SPINAL  
INJURY.

I DON'T CARE  
WHAT CRISWELL SAYS,  
THE LAST THING HERR  
SCHULD NEEDS IS TO  
BE **ACCOSTED** BY THE  
INDIVIDUAL WHO **PUT**  
HIM HERE--

DOCTOR.  
YOU CAN  
GO.





I SHOULD GO.

ALONE AT LAST.



ALONE WITH THIS BROKEN SACK OF MEAT AND BONE.

WAIT.



AND A HATRED I NEVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE.

FOR WHAT? FOR YOU TO APOLOGIZE? TO JUSTIFY PLACING THE SOUL OF THAT... MONSTER IN THE BODY OF MY FRIEND?

TO MAKE ME PITY YOU? FORGIVE YOU? IS THAT WHAT YOU WANT, SCHULD? ABSOLUTION?

WHAT DO I WANT?



I TRIED TO RID THE WORLD OF THE FILTH THAT STAINS MY FAMILY NAME, AND WAS WILLING TO SACRIFICE YOUR FRIEND TO DO IT.

I FAILED AT A COST THAT CAN ONLY BE DESCRIBED AS HIDEOUS.

I DESERVE NO ABSOLUTION, VAMPIRELLA. I DESERVE NOTHING LESS THAN YOUR RETRIBUTION.



GO BACK TO SLEEP, SCHULD.

DEATH IS TOO GOOD FOR YOU, SCHULD.

SOME SAY COMA PATIENTS CAN STILL HEAR WHAT WE SAY. SO HEAR THIS:



DEET  
BA-DEET

oooooooooooooooooooo

...THE DARKNESS YOU'RE IN NOW IS BETTER THAN YOU DESERVE.





DAMN.

I DON'T RELISH KILLING, I WANT TO FEEL HIS LIFE EBB BENEATH MY FANGS.

THE INNOCENT LIFE HE'S FOREVER DESTROYED.

THE UNIMAGINABLE HORROR HE'S SET LOOSE.



DAMN.

"KILL HIM."



"YOU DESERVE IT. INDULGE YOURSELF."

"JUST THIS ONCE."

DAMN.



RRRRRRRAAGH!

KA-RAKK



YOU LOOK LIKE SOMEONE WHO NEEDS TO BLOW OFF SOME STEAM.



MIGHT HAVE JUST THE THING FOR YOU, IF YOU'RE UP FOR IT.

THE LAST TIME WE WERE IN THE FIELD TOGETHER, HAWKING, THINGS DIDN'T END WELL.

THE EVENTS IN ANI WERE AN...UNFORTUNATE CONVERGENCE OF AGENDAS, VAMPIRELLA.

HAWKING AND HIS TEAM TRYING TO SHOOT SOFIA IN THE HEAD IS SOMETHING MORE THAN UNFORTUNATE CRISWELL.

DIFFERENT MISSION OBJECTIVES, THAT'S ALL.

WORK WITH US, AND YOU HAVE A MUCH BETTER CHANCE OF BRINGING SOFIA IN ALIVE.

TO THAT END...

I PROPOSE A NEW MISSION.

SEVERAL REPORTS OF PARANORMAL ACTIVITY. VISITATIONS, SOME KIND OF "GHOST PRIEST," HORRIFYING VISIONS.

ALL LOCALIZED, AND ALL HERE IN ROME.

NOTHING TOO SERIOUS, BUT THE FACT THAT IT'S RIGHT ON OUR DOORSTEP IS SOMETHING WE CAN'T IGNORE.

• EVENT 1: REPORTS OF "GHOSTLY SCREAMS" EMANATING FROM ALLEY, BORGO.  
• EVENT 2: 14 EYEWITNESSES REPORT THE FIGURE OF A BEHEADED PRIEST, WANDERING THE STREETS NEAR PASSETTO DI BORGO  
• EVENT 3: INCREASE IN RODENT POPULATION REPORTED, INCLUDING "STRANGE BEHAVIOR"  
>> LOADING...

SO WHAT DO YOU SAY?

UP FOR A NIGHT ON THE TOWN?



THE BORGIO,  
JUST OUTSIDE VATICAN CITY.  
ROME, ITALY.  
FOUR HOURS LATER.

I MAKE HIS PEOPLE  
NERVOUS, SO  
GETTING ME OUT  
OF THE VESTRY IS  
AN OBVIOUS MOVE.

KEEPING ME UNDER THE GUNS OF  
HAWKING AND HIS TEAM-- CODENAMED  
"NAIL"--SO THEY CAN EVALUATE ME  
FOR AN INEVITABLE CONFRONTATION  
IS EQUALLY OBVIOUS.

CRISWELL IS A  
CLEVER BASTARD,  
I'LL GIVE HIM  
THAT.

(AND I HAVE TO HAND IT TO THEM, THEY'RE  
GOOD. I HAVEN'T SEEN THEM OR CAUGHT  
THEIR SCENT IN HOURS, BUT I KNOW  
THEY'RE OUT THERE. WAITING. WATCHING.)

STILL, MY PRIORITIES  
HAVEN'T CHANGED.

IF CESTUS DEI CAN'T FIND SOFIA,  
I'M SURE THE UNDERWORLD OF  
SUPERNATURAL FORCES ON EARTH  
CAN PROVIDE ME WITH A LOCATION.

AND HAWKING IS RIGHT:  
I DO NEED TO BLOW  
OFF THE COBWEBS.

TOO BAD FOR  
WHATEVER POOR  
CREATURE ENDS  
UP IN MY WAY.

NORMANDY  
ONE TO NAIL  
TEAM, POSSIBLE  
CONTACT.

GET  
READY TO PLAY  
SOLDIER.

FOUR HOURS, AND NOTHING BUT  
FALSE ALARMS. INTERRUPTED  
TWO BURGLARS AND  
ONE WOULD-BE PURSE SNATCHER.

THIS FEELS DIFFERENT.  
A SCREAM, FILLED WITH  
UNBELIEVABLE PANIC.

(MOTHER  
OF GOD! HELP!  
CHRIST HELP  
ME!)

TIME TO  
GET BACK  
TO WORK.





THIS TIME, IT'S NO MERE STREET CRIME.



THE CLOSER I GET, I CAN FEEL IT.



LIKE STANDING TOO CLOSE TO A GENERATOR.



THERE'S SOMETHING BAD HERE. SOMETHING OLD, AND EVIL, AND REEKING OF BRIMSTONE.



(DEAR GOD, THE DEVIL IS IN THERE! THE DEVIL HIMSELF FATHER SON HOLY SPIRIT PROTECT ME--)\*

ALLEY, NORTHWEST CORNER. CIVILIAN PRESENT, SO TRY NOT TO KILL HER.



SOMETHING FROM HELL.

ACKNOWLEDGED. MOVING IN TO STAGING POSITION. 90 SECONDS TO WEAPONS FREE.

\*TRANSLATED FROM ITALIAN--J.R.



SOMETHING I'M GOING TO PUT THE FEAR OF GOD INTO.

TAKE YOUR TIME.



I EXPECT IT'LL BE OVER BY THEN.





I KNOW  
YOU'RE  
HERE.

splish

splish

splish



I CAN  
FEEL YOU  
WATCHING  
ME.

SHOW  
YOURSELF.



AS YOU WISH,  
HELLCHILD.



AS YOU WISH.



NAIL TEAM,  
GET THE CIVILIAN  
CLEAR. NOW.

WHAT?  
SAY AGAIN?  
WE NEED A  
SITREP--





SKEEEK

FIRST, THE  
SMELL OF  
BLOOD.

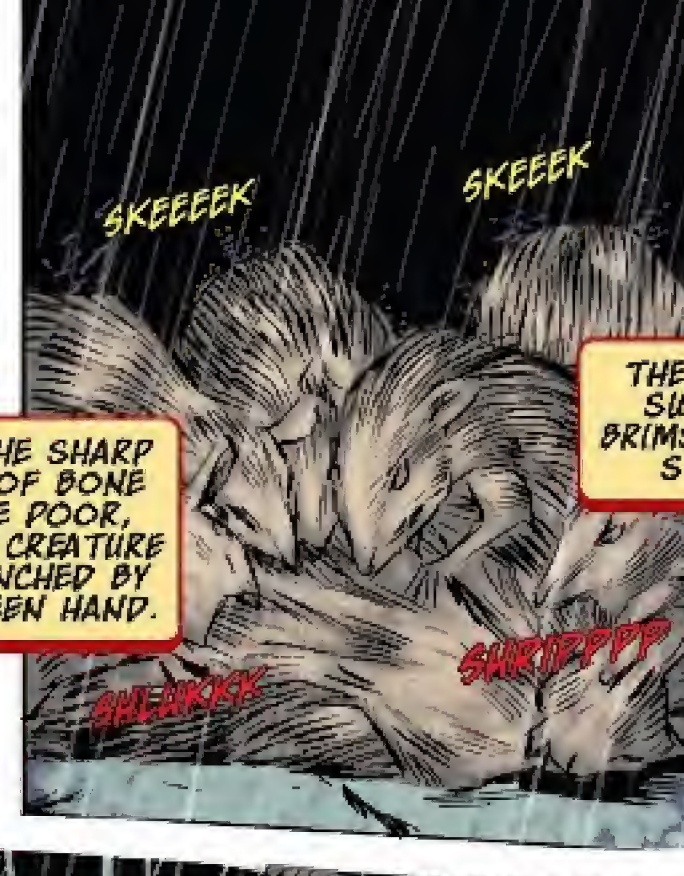


SKEEEK

SKEEEK

FUMPP

THEN THE SHARP  
CRACK OF BONE  
AS THE POOR,  
FRAGILE CREATURE  
IS WRENCHED BY  
AN UNSEEN HAND.



SKEEEK

SKEEEK

THE STENCH OF  
SULPHUR AND  
BRIMSTONE GROWS  
STRONGER.

SKEEEK

SKEEEK



SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

AND STRONGER.



SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

SKEEEK

FILLING THE  
ALLEY...

...WITH THE ACRID  
STENCH OF HELL  
ON EARTH.

WE HAVE SOME  
ACCOUNTS TO  
SETTLE, DON'T WE,  
VAMPIRELLA?

I DON'T KNOW WHO  
EXACTLY THIS IS.

DEMONS ARE PROTECTIVE  
OF THEIR TRUE NAMES,  
AND THIS ONE DIDN'T  
REVEAL MUCH THE LAST  
TIME WE MET.



OH, COME  
NOW.

LAST TIME  
I SAW IT WAS IN  
THE CATACOMBS  
BENEATH ANI.

YOU DESTROYED MY  
PREVIOUS ANCHOR  
TO THIS WORLD,  
VAMPIRELLA.

THE LAST TIME I  
KILLED IT'S LIVING  
HOST AND SENT IT  
SCREAMING BACK  
TO HELL.

YOU DIDN'T THINK  
I'D LEARN FROM  
THAT ENCOUNTER?





THEY'RE DAMN GOOD, HAWKING AND HIS MEN.

CRISWELL ALWAYS SMELLS VAGUELY OF SANDALWOOD. SCHULD, OF SCHNAPPS AND STALE CIGARETTES.

BUT THERE'S NO HINT OF THE SOLDIERS' APPROACH. NO TELLTALE SCENT OF COLOGNE, NO BAD BREATH, OR SWEAT.



BUT FOR ALL THEIR STEALTH...

(MOVE AWAY, MADAM. GO HOME, WHERE YOU'LL BE SAFE.)

(AND IF YOU'RE OF A MIND TO, SAY A PRAYER FOR US.)

(OF COURSE, YOUNG MAN...)



...THEY'RE STILL ONLY HUMAN.

(...THERE'S ALWAYS TIME FOR A LITTLE PRAYER.)



THEY ARE JUST CRUDE FLESH AND BLOOD...

TIME FOR YOU TO PLAY YOUR PART, BROTHER.



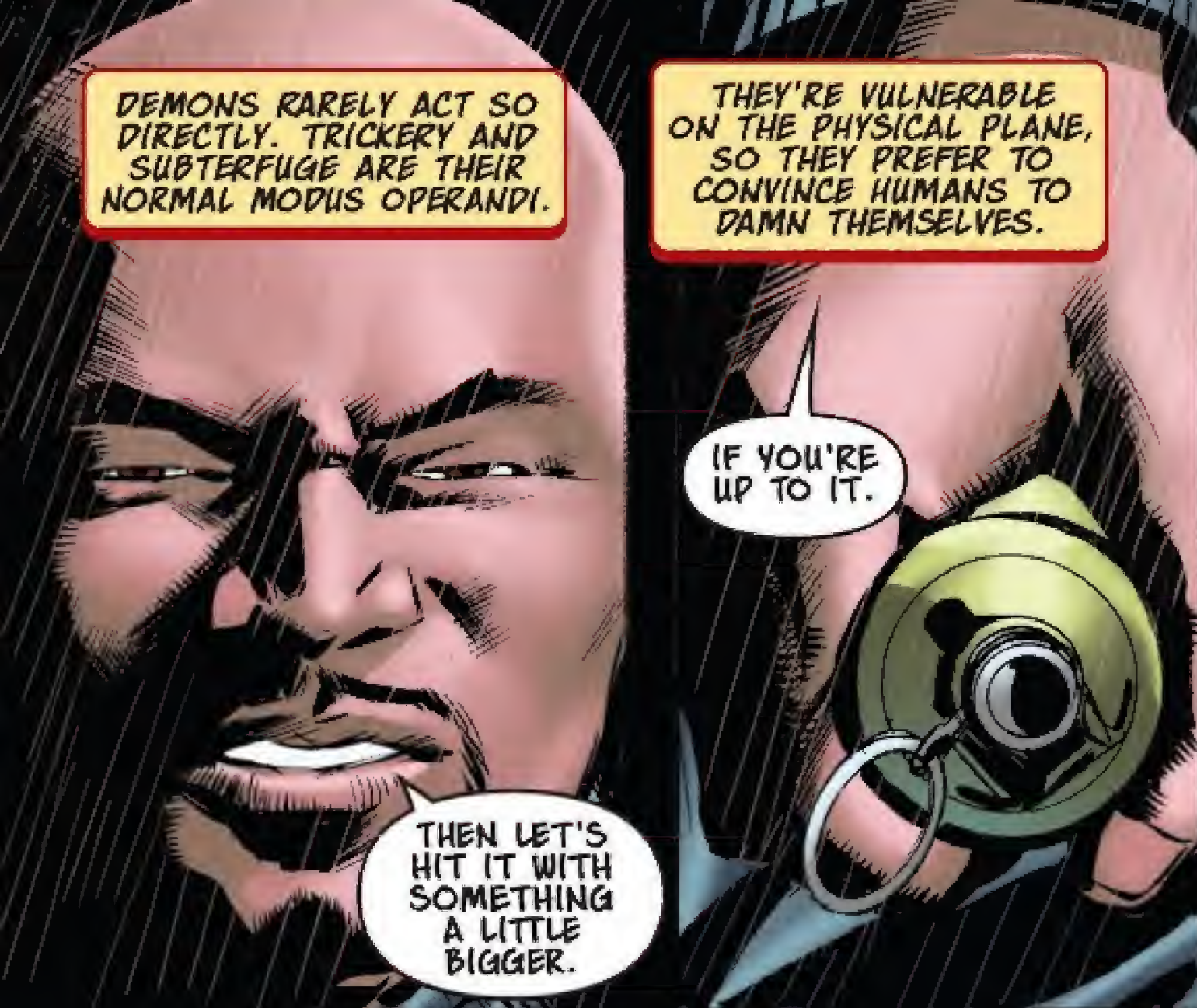
...STANDING AGAINST THE MACHINATIONS OF HELL.

AND SOON, IT WILL BE GRIGORY'S TIME TO TAKE THE STAGE.









DEMONS RARELY ACT SO DIRECTLY. TRICKERY AND SUBTERFUGE ARE THEIR NORMAL MODUS OPERANDI.

THEY'RE VULNERABLE ON THE PHYSICAL PLANE, SO THEY PREFER TO CONVINCE HUMANS TO DAMN THEMSELVES.

IF YOU'RE UP TO IT.

THEN LET'S HIT IT WITH SOMETHING A LITTLE BIGGER.



THAT'S ALL PART OF THE FUN FOR THEM.

HELL, YES.



FOR A DEMON TO ENGAGE IN OVERT PHYSICAL CONFRONTATION MEANS THAT THE RULES ARE CHANGING.

EXCEPT IN ONE IMPORTANT RESPECT:



THEY CAN BURN.

TING



THEY CAN BLEED.





THEY CAN  
BREAK.

SHLUKKKK



AND LIKE THAT,  
IT'S GONE AGAIN.

LIKE SCUM DOWN  
A SEWAGE DRAIN.

YOUR  
MEN OKAY,  
HAWKING?

WE'VE SEEN  
WORSE.

BUT I'VE  
NEVER SEEN  
THIS.

AN ALLEY?

IT'S THE VATICAN,  
VAMPIRELLA. CESTUS  
DEI HAS EVERY CRYPT,  
EVERY TUNNEL, EVERY  
STREET MAPPED.

EVERYTHING  
EXCEPT **THIS**  
**ONE.**

THE BLAST  
OPENED UP A  
HOLE THAT JUST  
SHOULDN'T BE  
HERE.



A COINCIDENCE, PERHAPS, OR AN INVITATION TO A TRAP.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO DISTANCE MYSELF FROM HUMANS, THEY ALWAYS FIND A WAY TO SURPRISE ME.

YOU SHOULD STAY BEHIND.

IN EITHER CASE, HAWKING DOESN'T SAY A WORD. HE JUST FOLLOWS ME IN, WITH NO HESITATION.

RIGHT. BECAUSE THAT SEEMS LIKELY.

AS YOU WISH, HAWKING...

SUCH BRAVERY IN THE FACE OF INCALCULABLE, BOTTOMLESS EVIL.

...BUT I THINK YOU'RE GOING TO REGRET THAT DECISION.







IT'S NOT MY FIRST DANCE.

I'VE SEEN THIS KIND OF SARCOPHAGUS BEFORE.

IN THE CRYPTS BELOW A DECONSECRATED CHURCH IN SEATTLE.



IF THIS IS WHAT I THINK IT IS, BE READY.



THE NIGHT I MET SOFIA, IN THE HEART OF A NEST OF VAMPIRES.

BECAUSE THINGS ARE ABOUT TO GET A LOT WORSE.

**RRRRRRUMMBLE**



VAMPIRES THAT WEREN'T QUITE VAMPIRES ANYMORE.

MOTHER OF GOD...



MONSTERS TWISTED INTO SOMETHING DARKER, OLDER, BURNING WITH A HUNGER IMPOSSIBLE TO SATE.

NOT QUITE.

YOU. AT LAST.



THAT SCENT, IMPOSSIBLE  
TO FORGET. LAVENDER AND  
DUST AND ROTTING MEAT.

ONCE, THE CHOSEN  
FAVORITE OF DRACULA  
HIMSELF, HIS RED  
RIGHT HAND.

THEN, A WOULD-BE  
USURPER TO DRACULA'S  
RULE OF THE KINGDOM  
OF VAMPIRES.

THE JILTED BRIDE OF  
YAG-ATH VERMELLUS,  
A PREHISTORIC GOD  
OF HUNGER.

HELLO,  
LE FANU.

VAMPIRELLA.  
MY MURDERER.

THE OLD  
SAYING IS  
TRUE...

...GOOD  
THINGS DO  
COME TO SHE  
WHO WAITS.

TO BE  
CONTINUED



DYNAMITE  
19

# VAMPIRELLA





DYNAMITE  
19

# VAMPIRELLA®





DYNAMITE  
19

# VAMPIRELLA®





DYNAMITE  
19

# VAMPIRELLA®







UNDERGROUND.  
AGAIN.

ANOTHER MOLDY  
CRYPT.

NAIL TEAM,  
CONTACT  
FRONT!



ANOTHER HORROR,  
ENRAGED AND IN  
THE THROES OF  
BLOODLUST.

HOLD  
YOUR FIRE,  
SOLDIER.

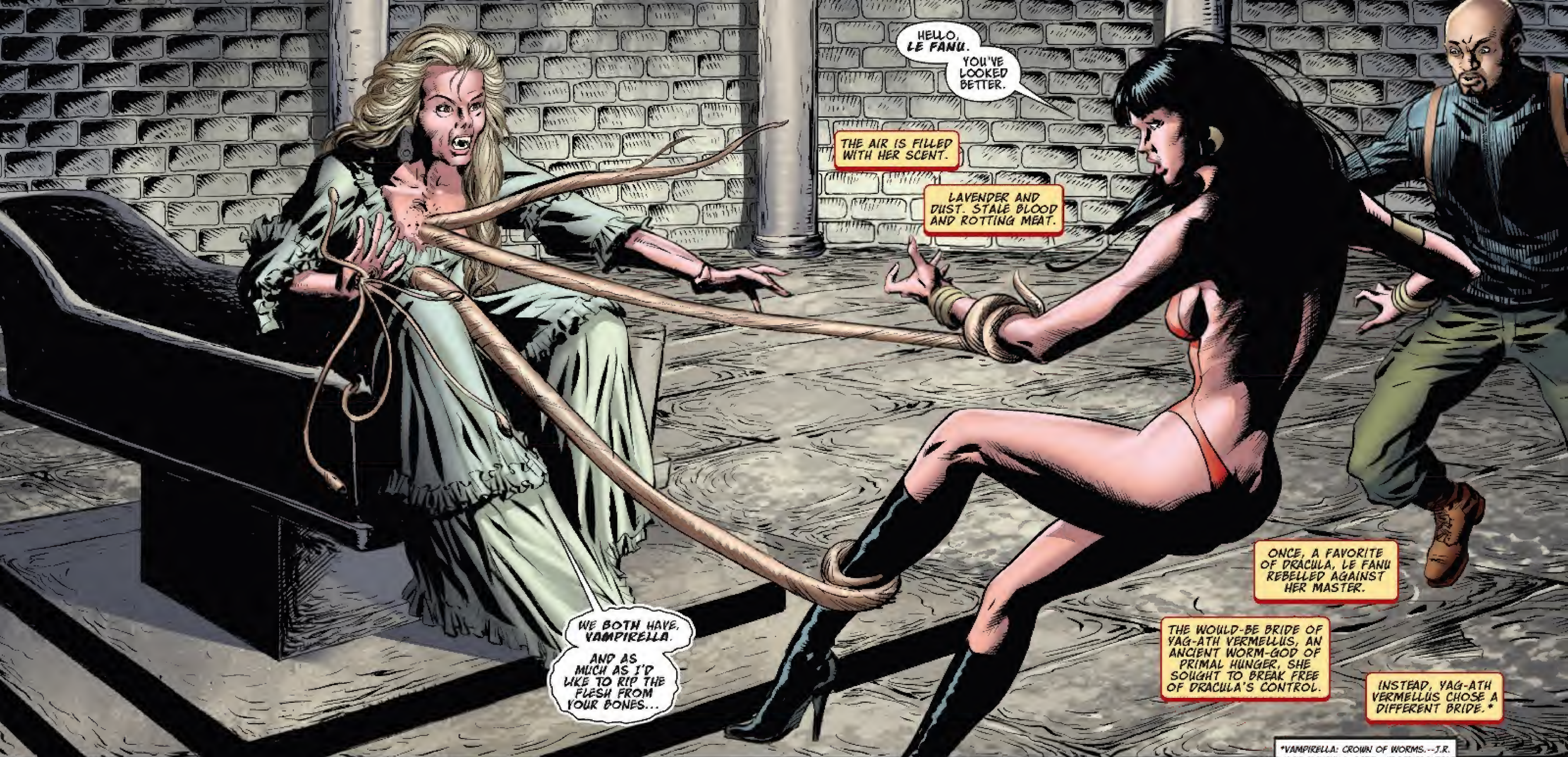
YOU'D THINK  
BY NOW I'D  
KNOW BETTER:

NOTHING GOOD  
EVER HAPPENS  
UNDERGROUND.

I NEED  
TO GREET AN  
OLD FRIEND.







HELLO,  
LE FANU.  
YOU'VE  
LOOKED  
BETTER.

THE AIR IS FILLED  
WITH HER SCENT.

LAVENDER AND  
DUST. STALE BLOOD  
AND ROTTING MEAT.

ONCE, A FAVORITE  
OF DRACULA, LE FANU  
REBELLED AGAINST  
HER MASTER.

THE WOULD-BE BRIDE OF  
YAG-ATH VERMELLUS, AN  
ANCIENT WORM-GOD OF  
PRIMAL HUNGER, SHE  
SOUGHT TO BREAK FREE  
OF DRACULA'S CONTROL.

INSTEAD, YAG-ATH  
VERMELLUS CHOSE A  
DIFFERENT BRIDE.\*

WE BOTH HAVE,  
VAMPIRELLA.  
AND AS  
MUCH AS I'D  
LIKE TO RIP THE  
FLESH FROM  
YOUR BONES...

\*VAMPIRELLA: CROWN OF WORMS...-J.R.



TARGET  
CONTACT,  
FIRE ON MY  
ORDER--



?!



I'M NOT  
HERE TO FIGHT  
YOU.



YOU LEFT  
ME TO ROT.  
YOU LEFT ME  
FOR DEAD.

IT HAS  
TAKEN MORE  
THAN A YEAR.

IT HAS  
TAKEN ALL MY  
STRENGTH...

...TO RETERN  
THE FAVOR.

KEEP,  
VAMPIRELLA.  
DESPAIR.  
BECAUSE  
SOON...

...YOU'LL  
WISH YOU'D  
DIED IN  
SEATTLE.







SHE'S CRUMBLING,  
LIKE OLD LEAVES.

WHATEVER IT WAS THAT HAD  
KEPT HER GOING, THAT HAD  
KNITTED HER BACK TOGETHER,  
IS GONE NOW.

HM.  
YOU HAVE  
INTERESTING  
FRIENDS.

THAT SOUNDED  
LIKE A WARNING.  
SHE SEEM LIKE THE  
TYPE TO GIVE YOU  
A HEADS-UP?



ALL THAT HATE, ALL THAT RAGE...

SO.  
A TRAP?

A TRAP.



...ALL FEEL LIKE  
AN ECHO OF MY  
OWN SINS.

GET THEM  
MOVING RIGHT  
NOW.



KRRRAK



BEFORE  
WE'RE ALL  
OUT OF  
TIME.



I'VE SEEN THESE THINGS BEFORE, IN THE RUINED UNDER-CITY BELOW SEATTLE.

K-POW

K-POW

K-POW

THE OFFSPRING OF YAG-ATH VERMELLUS.

HAWKING--AND THE REST OF HIS TEAM--ARE PROS. THEY DON'T HESITATE, THEY DON'T BALK, THEY DON'T BLINK IN THE FACE OF OTHERWORLDLY HORRORS LIKE THESE.

THEY JUST STAND THEIR GROUND WHEN THE GATES OF HELL SWING OPEN.

TOO EASY.

WASN'T TOO BAD.

IT ALL FEELS WRONG, LIKE THE MOMENT BEFORE THE STORM BREAKS AND THE LIGHTNING STRIKES BEGIN.

NO. IT WASN'T. THAT'S WHAT WORRIES ME.

IT'S TOO... CLEAN.

THANK YOU, VAMPIRELLA. IT'S ALWAYS NICE TO HAVE LOOSE ENDS TIED UP.

OH NO.



"OH NO?"

I'D HOPED  
FOR A WARMER  
GREETING,  
HELLCHILD.  
STILL...

VLAD  
DRACULA.

THE LORD OF  
VAMPIRES.

THE WELLSPRING OF ALL  
THE BLOOD-DRENCHED  
LEGENDS, THE WORST  
TO PREY ON HAPLESS  
HUMANS LOST ON  
MOONLIT STREETS.

THE IMPOSSIBLE  
MONSTER DOING  
THE IMPOSSIBLE.

WALKING IN  
DAYLIGHT.

...YOU NEVER  
FAIL TO BRING  
A SMILE TO  
MY FACE.



THEY'RE WELL TRAINED. CONTROLLING THEIR EMOTIONS, MASTERING THEIR FEAR.

YOU WON'T BE SMILING FOR LONG--

WAIT.

YOU AND YOUR MEN ARE GOOD, HAWKING, BUT YOU'RE NOT READY FOR HIM.

I KNOW WHO--AND WHAT--HE IS. AND WE'RE TRAINED TO HANDLE HIS KIND.

BUT I CAN HEAR THE POUNDING OF THEIR HEARTS. I CAN ALMOST TASTE THE BLAST OF ADRENALINE THAT SURGES THROUGH THEIR VEINS.

HA HA HA HA!

OF COURSE YOU ARE. COME THEN, HOLY MAN.

"HANDLE" ME.

THEIR WEAPONS ARE BLESSED. THEIR BULLETS, SHOT THROUGH WITH PURIFIED SILVER.

WITH THEIR SKILL, UNDER NORMAL CIRCUMSTANCES, HAWKING AND HIS MEN MIGHT BE CAPABLE OF HURTING DRACULA.

BUT VLAD IS WALKING AROUND IN SUNSHINE WITH A SMILE ON HIS FACE.

WE'RE AS FAR FROM NORMAL AS WE CAN GET.

STOP.

NAIL TEAM:

TAKE HIM.



THEY'RE STILL ONLY HUMAN, AFTER ALL.

SNAP

...TIME JUST STANDS STILL.

IT TAKES LESS THAN A SECOND, BEFORE THEIR FINGERS TIGHTEN ON THE TRIGGERS...

IT TAKES AN EYEBLINK, AND THE ALLEY BECOMES A KILL ZONE.

AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

K-POW  
K-POW

THEY'RE STILL ONLY HUMAN, AFTER ALL.

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AND ALL HELL BREAKS LOOSE.

K-POW  
K-POW





TWO EYEBLINKS, AND  
THE FIGHT BEGINS  
TO TURN AGAINST  
MY ALLIES.

BEFORE THE THIRD  
EYEBLINK, AMMUNITION IS  
EXPENDED AND THE BATTLE  
BECOMES A CONTEST OF  
MEAT AND MUSCLE.

UNFORTUNATE.

IN THE END, FOR ALL  
THEIR SKILLS, THEY'RE  
STILL HUMAN.





WHAT IS IT  
YOU WANT,  
VLAD?



YOUR  
ATTENTION.



YOU'VE  
GOT IT.

IF HISTORY  
IS ANY EXAMPLE,  
THOUGH...



...THAT  
DOESN'T WORK  
OUT TOO WELL  
FOR YOU.



ENOUGH  
CAT-AND-MOUSE  
GAMES.

IT'S ME  
YOU WANT.

IT'S  
ALWAYS  
ME YOU  
WANT.



I'M NOT  
SURE *WHAT* YOUR  
MOST HUMAN TRAIT  
IS, LITTLE GIRL.

YOUR LACK OF  
PATIENCE, OR YOUR  
LACK OF ATTENTION  
TO *DETAIL*.





MY NEW CHILDREN COULD'VE ATTACKED YOU, TOO.

THEY DIDN'T.

INSTEAD, THEY'VE SUBDUED YOUR "ALLIES."



THE GOOD AND HOLY MEN, CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS, WHO WOULD'VE HAPPILY KILLED YOUR FRIEND, SOFIA.\*

AND THESE INNOCENTS ARE SAFE. FOR THE MOMENT.

\*SEE VAMPIRELLA #16-17.--J.R.



I HAVE A CONFESSION TO MAKE, HOWEVER.

DAYLIGHT, A PUBLIC SQUARE FILLED WITH TERRIFIED, SQUEALING PEOPLE FACING PAINFUL DEATH?

I'VE MISSED THIS.



ALL RIGHT, VLAD. I'LL BITE.

YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT DETAILS? LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR NEW ABILITY TO SOAK UP THE SUN.





PATIENCE.  
ALL THINGS  
TO SHE WHO  
WAITS.

I KNOW A THING OR  
TWO ABOUT **WAITING**,  
AFTER ALL. CENTURIES  
CONFINED TO SHADOWS,  
TO CRYPTS AND CAVES  
AND DARKENED CELLARS.  
LIKE A **WORM**.



I KNEW  
IT WOULD TAKE  
PURE, RAW  
POWER TO STEP  
FROM THE  
SHADOWS.

ANCIENT,  
GODLIKE  
POWER.

LIKE THAT  
OF YAG-ATH  
VERMELLUS.



BUT YOU  
CAN'T JUST  
HARNESS THAT  
POWER.

ALLIANCES  
MUST BE STRUCK.  
PACTS MADE.



LIKE THE  
ONE I NEARLY  
STRUCK.

THE ONE YOU  
DISRUPTED.



I'D BEEN  
A PAWN IN THE  
STRUGGLE  
BETWEEN ORDER  
AND CHAOS.

BUT AFTER  
YEARS OF BEING  
CRUSHED BETWEEN  
THE GEARS, I LEARNED  
SOMETHING.  
SOMETHING NEITHER  
SIDE WANTED ME  
TO KNOW.

ORDER  
AND CHAOS  
WERE NOT THE  
ONLY GAMES  
IN TOWN.

THERE  
WERE OLDER,  
STRANGER  
FORCES AT  
PLAY.



AND  
ONCE I LEARNED  
OF THEIR  
EXISTENCE...

...ALL MANNER  
OF THINGS BECAME  
POSSIBLE. FOR  
A PRICE.





GODS OF HATE.

OF FEAR.

OF SORROW.

OF BOTTOMLESS HUNGER.

ALL EAGER TO CLAW THEIR WAY BACK INTO OUR WORLD AND CAST IT BACK INTO PRIMAL SAVAGERY AND DEATH.

I CHOSE YOU, VAMPIRELLA, AS THE BRIDE OF YAG-ATH VERMELLUS, EVEN OVER MY BELOVED LE FANU.

DID YOU EVER WONDER WHY?

GODS OF HATE.

OF FEAR.

OF SORROW.

OF BOTTOMLESS HUNGER.

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OF HATE.

OF FEAR.

OF SORROW.

OF  
BOTTOMLESS  
HUNGER.

ALL EAGER  
TO CLAW THEIR  
WAY BACK INTO  
OUR WORLD AND  
CAST IT BACK INTO  
PRIMAL SAVAGERY  
AND DEATH.

I CHOSE YOU,  
VAMPIRELLA, AS THE  
BRIDE OF YAG-ATH  
VERMELLUS, EVEN  
OVER MY BELOVED  
LE FANU.

DID YOU  
EVER WONDER  
WHY?





I'M GOING TO ASSUME IT'S THE **OUTFIT**.

BECAUSE YOU ALWAYS WIN.



EVERY SCHEME. EVERY PLOT. EVERY TIME DEMONS BREAK FREE FROM HELL, YOU DEFEAT THEM.

GHOSTS. VAMPIRES. WEREWOLVES. SERIAL KILLERS. THE KERASHU SHIMEI.

YOU'VE ALWAYS BEATEN ALL COMERS.



NO. DARK MOTHER, DON'T LET HIM.

THOUGH YOUR HUMAN COMPANIONS USUALLY PAY A STEEP PRICE FOR YOUR VICTORIES.

IF I MOVE, I'LL NEVER REACH HIM IN TIME.



DON'T THEY?



VLAD'S... CREATURES WILL KILL THEM ALL BEFORE I CAN GET MY HANDS ON HIM.

DAMN YOU, VLAD.

DON'T DO THIS.





YOU HAVE  
NO IDEA  
WHAT I  
CAN DO.

ANOTHER VICTIM  
OF YOUR THIRST  
FOR CONQUEST.



ANOTHER MONSTER,  
BORN IN YOUR WAKE.

NNNNFH



NNNNGNGGGGAH!



SHHHHH LLUCK

HHUUURR

RRRAHKKK!





THE SCREAMS  
QUICKLY GIVE WAY  
TO THE WET SOUND  
OF TEARING MEAT.

IT PROBABLY  
TAKES NO  
MORE THAN  
TWO OR THREE  
SECONDS.

SHHHLLLUCK



HISSSSSS

IT JUST FEELS  
LIKE AN ETERNITY.



WHUDD

HFFFF  
--THY ROD  
AND THY STAFF,  
THEY COMFORT  
ME--



--SURELY  
GOODNESS AND  
MERCY SHALL  
FOLLOW ME ALL  
THE DAYS OF  
MY LIFE--



--AND I WILL DWELL  
IN THE HOUSE OF THE  
LORD FOREVER.

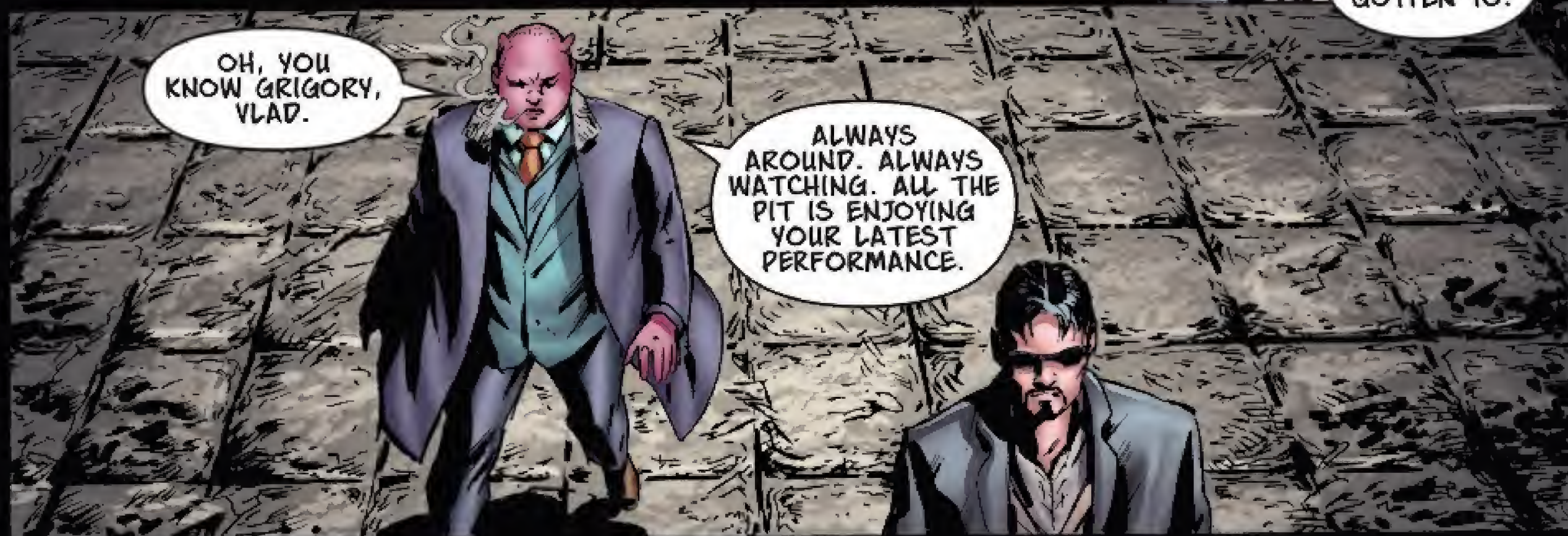
BUT YOU  
FIRST.

BLAM



GO GO  
GO!









IT'S ALL ABOUT  
TIME NOW. A  
RACE AGAINST  
THE INEVITABLE.

IT TOOK **SECONDS**  
FOR VLAD TO  
TRANSFORM OPENA.

BLAM  
BLAM

BLAM  
BLAM

GET OUT  
OF HERE  
HAWKING!

IT TOOK SECONDS FOR THIS  
SWARM OF HORRORS TO SUBDUCE  
HAWKING AND HIS TEAM.

SAVE YOUR  
MEN!

TICKS OF THE SECOND  
HAND BETWEEN LIFE  
AND DEATH.

NAIL TWO, NAIL  
THREE, EXFIL  
NOW!



FOR ALL  
OF THEM.

SHOULD'VE  
GONE WITH  
THEM.

PROBABLY.

KICK



GOT ANY  
IDEAS?





I'M GOING  
TO STICK WITH  
KILLING EVERYTHING  
I CAN AND PRAYING  
A LOT.

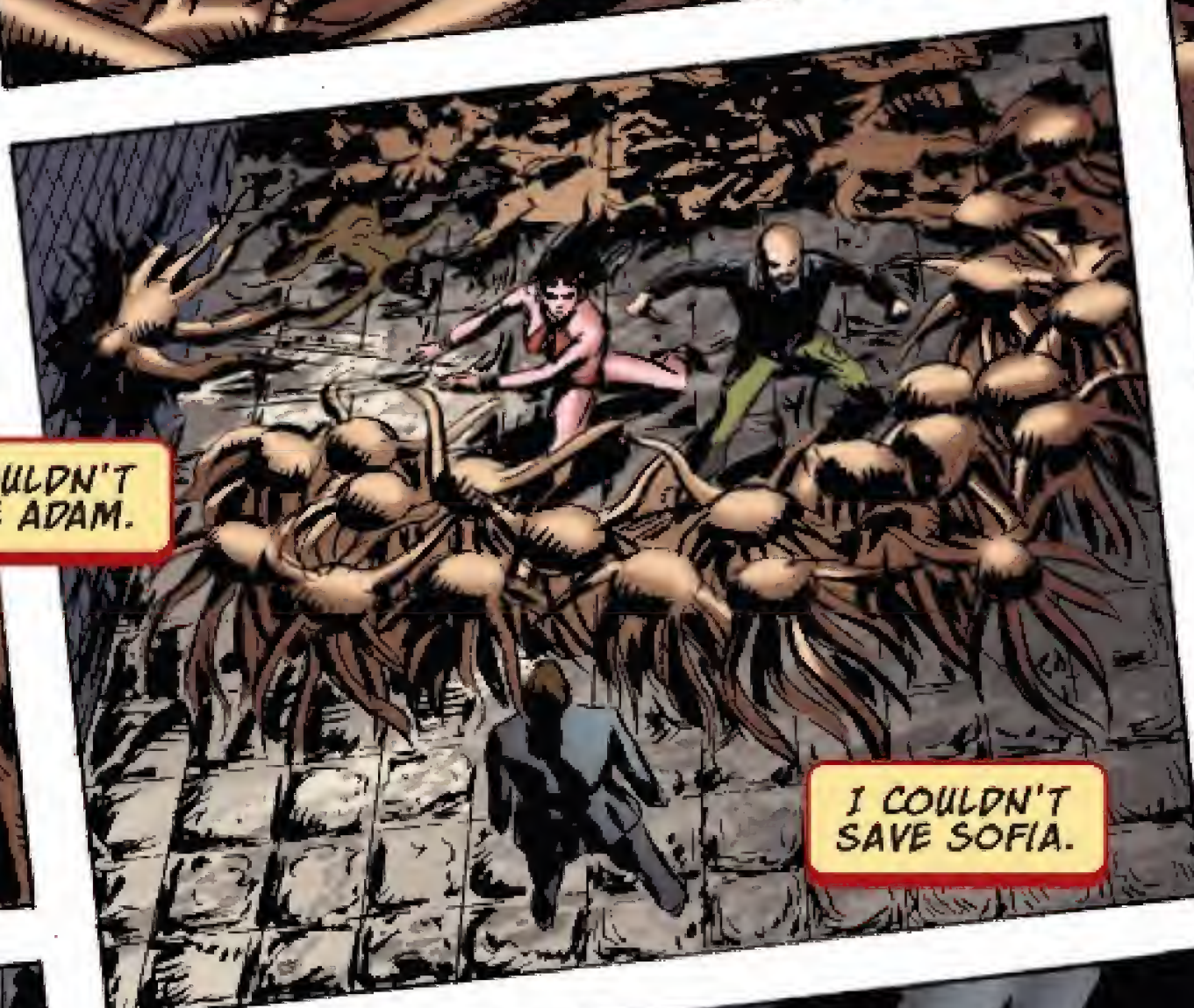
IT'S A LOST  
CAUSE.

I KNOW IT.



I CAN'T SAVE  
THEM ALL.

I COULDN'T  
SAVE ADAM.



I COULDN'T  
SAVE SOFIA.



I COULDN'T SAVE  
HAWKING'S MAN,  
OPENA.

BUT I PROMISE  
YOU, VLAD:



IF THEY HAD TO DIE,  
I'M GOING TO MAKE  
SURE THAT YOU GO  
WITH THEM.

ALL THESE  
YEARS...

GGKKKK

...AND YOU STILL  
HAVEN'T LEARNED  
TO BE POLITE.

YOU JUST DON'T  
UNDERSTAND.

THESE CREATURES  
I CAN MAKE AT WILL,  
MY NEWFOUND STRENGTH,  
MY ABILITY TO WALK IN  
DAYLIGHT AFTER SO VERY  
MANY LONG, COLD  
YEARS...

...I OWE  
IT ALL TO  
YOU.

TO BE  
CONTINUED